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THE ATLANTIC BOOK
OF
MODERN PLAYS

THE ATLANTIC BOOK OF MODERN PLAYS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION, COMMENT
AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY

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The Atlantic Monthly Press
BOSTON

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FOREWORD

WE are at present in the midst of a bewildering quantity of play-publication and production. The one-act play in particular, chiefly represented in this volume, appears to be taking the place of that rather squeezed sponge, the short story, in the favor of the reading public. Of course, this tendency has its reaction in school-rooms. One even hears of high-school classes which attempt to keep up with the entire output of such dramas in English readings. If this is not merely an apology, it is certainly a horrible example. The bulk of current drama, as of published matter generally, is not worthy the time of the English class. Only what is measurably of rank, in truth and fineness, with the literature which has endured from past times can be defended for use there. And we have too much that is both well fitted to young people's keen interest and enjoyment, and beautifully worthy as well, for time to be wasted upon the third- and fourth-rate.

Obviously, much of the best in modern play-writing has not been included in this volume. Because of copyright complications the works of Mr. Masefield, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Drinkwater, and Sir James Barrie are not here represented. The plays by these writers that seem best fitted to use by teachers and pupils in high schools, together with a large number of other dramas for this purpose, are listed and annotated at the back of the book. Suggestions as to desirable inclusions and omissions will be welcomed by the editor and the publishers.

Following in their own way the lead of the Théâtre Libre in Paris and the Freie Buhne in Germany, and of the Independent and the Repertory theatres in Great Britain, numerous "little theatres" and drama associations in this country are giving impulsion and direction to the movement for finer drama and more excellent presentation. The Harvard dramatic societies, the Morningside Players at Columbia, Mr. Alex Drummond's Community Theatre at the State Fair in Ithaca, the Little Country Theatre at Fargo, South Dakota, and similar groups at the Uni-

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versity of California and elsewhere, illustrate the leadership of the colleges. In many high schools, as at South Bend, Indiana, more or less complete Little Theatres are active. The Chicago Little Theatre, the Wisconsin Dramatic Society, the Provincetown Players, the Neighborhood Playhouse, in New York, and others of that ilk, are well known and influential. They are extending the tradition of the best European theatres in their attempts to cultivate excellent and individual expression in drama. They realize that plays must be tested by actual performance,—though not necessarily by the unnatural demands of success in competition with Broadway revues and farce-melodramas,—and thus developed toward a genuine artistic embodiment of the vast and varied life, the manifold and deep idealism of this country.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

FOR their courteous and generous cooperation the editor is greatly indebted to the authors and publishers of all the plays included. He is equally grateful to other dramatists who were personally as cordial in intention but quite impotent to grant copyright privileges. In addition, he has received most friendly and cordial criticism from friends and friendly strangers to whom he appealed — among others, from Mr. Harold Brighouse; Mr. Theodore Hinckley, editor of "Drama", Mr Clarence Stratton, now Director of English at Cleveland, and author of a forthcoming book on the Little Theatre in this country, Mr. Allan Monkhouse, author of "Mary Broome" and "War Plays"; Professor Allan Abbot, of Teachers College, Columbia University; Mr. Frank G. Thompkins, of Central High School, Detroit; Mrs. Mary Austin; Professor Earl R. Pence, of De Pauw University; Professor Brander Matthews, and Mrs. Alice Chapin. Indebtedness to many lists is obvious, particularly to that of the Drama League and the National Council of Teachers of English, and that of Professor Pence in the "Illinois Bulletin."

INTRODUCTION: ON THE READING OF PLAYS

THE elder Dumas, who wrote many successful plays, as well as the famous romances, said that all he needed for constructing a drama was "four boards, two actors, and a passion." What he meant by passion has been defined by a later French writer, Ferdinand Brunetière, as a conflict of wills. The Philosopher of Butterbiggens, whom you will meet early in this book, points out that "what you are all the time wanting" is "your own way." When two strong desires conflict and we wonder which is coming out ahead, we say that the situation is dramatic. This clash is clearly defined in any effective play, from the crude melodrama in which the forces are hero and villain with pistols, to such subtle conflicts, based on a man's misunderstanding of even his own motives and purposes, as in Mr. Middleton's "Tides."

In comedy, and even in farce, struggle is clearly present. Here our sympathy is with people who engage in a not impossible combat — against rather obvious villains who can be unmasked, or against such public opinion or popular conventions as can be overset. The hold of an absurd bit of gossip upon stupid people is firm enough in "Spreading the News"; but fortunately it must yield to facts at last. The Queen and the Knave of Hearts are sufficiently clever, with the aid of the superb cookery of the Knave's wife, to do away with an ancient and solemnly revered law of Pompdebile's court. So, too, the force of ancient loyalty and enthusiasm almost works a miracle in the invalid veteran of "Gettysburg." And we feel sure that the uncanny powers of the Beggar will be no less successful in overturning the power of the King in Mr. Parkhurst's play.

Again, in comedies as in mathematics, the problem is often solved by substitution. The soldier in Mr. Galsworthy's "The Sun" is able to find a satisfactory and apparently happy ending without achieving what he originally set out to gain. And the same is true of Jock in Mr. Brighouse's "Lonesome-Like." Or the play which does not end as the chief character wishes may still

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prove not too serious because, as in "Fame and the Poet," the situation is merely inconvenient and absurd rather than tragic. Now and then it is next to impossible to tell whether the ending is tragic or not; in the "Land of Heart's Desire" we must first decide whether our sympathies are more with Shawn Bruin and with Maire's love for him, or with her keen desire to go

To where the woods, the stars, and the white streams
Are holding a continual festival

It is natural for us to desire a happy ending in stories, as we desire satisfying solutions of the problems in our own lives. And whenever the forces at work are such as make it true and possible, naturally this is the best ending for a story or a play. But where powerful and terrible influences have to be combated, only a poor dramatist will make use of mere chance, or compel his characters to do what such people really would not do, to bring about a factitious "happy ending." With the relentless, mighty arms of England engaged in hunting the defeated Highlanders after the Battle of Culloden, a play like "Campbell of Kilmhor," in which we sympathize with the ill-fated Stewarts, cannot end happily. If they had yielded under pressure and betrayed their comrades, we might have pitied them, but we could not admire their action, and there would have been no strong conclusion. In "Riders to the Sea," where the characters are compelled by bitter poverty to face the relentless forces of storm and sea, and in "The Riding to Lithend," we expect a tragic end almost from the first lines of the play. We recognize this same dramatic tensity of hopeless conflict in many stories as well as plays; it is most powerful in three or four novels by George Eliot, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy.

One of the best ways to understand these as real stage plays is through some sort of dramatization. This does not mean, however, that they need be produced with elaborate scenery and costumes, memorizing, and rehearsal; often the best understanding may be secured by quite informal reading in the class, with perhaps a hat and cloak and a lath sword or two for properties. With simply a clear space in the classroom for a stage, you and your imaginations can give all the performance necessary for realizing these plays very well indeed. But, of course, you must clearly understand the lines and the play as a whole before you try to take a part, so that you can read simply and naturally, as

you think the people in the story probably spoke. Some questions for discussion in the appendix may help you in talking the plays over in class or in reading them for yourself before you try to take a part. You will find it sometimes helps, also, to make a diagram or a colored sketch of the scene as the author describes it, or even a small model of the stage for a "dramatic museum" for your school. If you have not tried this, you do not know how much it helps in seeing plays of other times, like Shakespeare's or Molière's, and it is useful also for modern dramas. Such small stages can be used for puppet theatres as well. "*The Knave of Hearts*" is intended as a marionette play, and other dramas — Maeterlinck's and even Shakespeare's — have been given in this way with very interesting effects.

If you bring these plays to a performance for others outside your own class, you will find that the simplest and least pretentious settings are generally most effective. The Irish players, as Mr. Yeats tells us, "have made scenery, indeed, but scenery that is little more than a suggestion — a pattern with recurring boughs and leaves of gold for a wood, a great green curtain, with a red stencil upon it to carry the eye upward, for a palace." Mr. John Merrill of the Francis Parker School describes the quite excellent results secured with a dark curtain in a semicircle — a cyclorama — for background, and with colored lights.¹ Such a staging leaves the attention free to follow the lines, and the imagination to picture whatever the play suggests as the place of the action.

¹ John Merrill. "Drama and the School," in *Drama*, November, 1919

THE PHILOSOPHER OF BUTTERBIGGENS¹

HAROLD CHAPIN

CHARACTERS

DAVID PIRNIE

LIZZIE, his daughter

JOHN BELL, his son-in-law

ALEXANDER, John's little son

SCENE: JOHN BELL'S tenement at Butterbiggens. It consists of the very usual "two rooms, kitchen, and bath," a concealed bed in the parlor and another in the kitchen enabling him to house his family—consisting of himself, his wife, his little son, and his aged father-in-law—therein. The kitchen-and-living-room is a good-sized square room. The right wall (our right as we look at it) is occupied by a huge built-in dresser, sink, and coal bunker, the left wall by a high-manteled, ovened, and boilered fireplace, the recess on either side of which contains a low painted cupboard. Over the far cupboard hangs a picture of a ship, but over the near one is a small square window. The far wall has two large doors in it, that on the right leading to the lobby, and that on the left appertaining to the old father-in-law's concealed bed.

¹ Included by special permission of Mrs. Alice Chapin. Permission to present this play must be secured from Samuel French, 28 West 38th Street, New York City, who controls all acting rights, etc., in this country.

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The walls are distempered a brickish red. The ceiling once was white. The floor is covered with bright linoleum and a couple of rag rugs — one before the fire — a large one — and a smaller one before the door of the concealed bed.

A deal table is just to right of centre. A long flexible gas-bracket depends from the ceiling above it. Another many-jointed gas-bracket projects from the middle of the high mantelpiece, its flame turned down towards the stove. There are wooden chairs at the table, above, below, and to left of it. A high-backed easy chair is above the fire, a kitchen elbow-chair below it.

The kitchen is very tidy. A newspaper newly fallen to the rug before the fire and another — an evening one — spread flat on the table are (besides a child's mug and plate, also on the table) the only things not stowed in their prescribed places. It is evening — the light beyond the little square window being the gray dimness of a long Northern twilight which slowly deepens during the play. When the curtain rises it is still light enough in the room for a man to read if the print be not too faint and his eyes be good. The warm light of the fire leaps and flickers through the gray, showing up with exceptional clearness the deep-lined face of old DAVID PIRNIE, who is discovered half-risen from his armchair above the fire, standing on the hearth-rug, his body bent and his hand on the chair arm. He is a little, feeble old man with a well-shaped head and weather-beaten face, set off by a grizzled beard and whiskers, wiry and vigorous, in curious contrast to the wreath of snowy hair that encircles his head. His upper lip is shaven. He wears an old suit — the unbuttoned waistcoat of which shows an old flannel shirt. His slippers are low at the heel and his socks loose at the ankles.

The old man's eyes are fixed appealingly on those of his daughter, who stands in the half-open door, her grasp on the handle, meeting his look squarely — a straight-browed, black-haired, determined young woman of six or seven and twenty. Her husband, JOHN, seated at the table in his shirt-sleeves with his head in his hands, reads hard at the paper and tries to look unconcerned.

DAVID. Aw — but, Lizzie —

LIZZIE (*with splendid firmness*). It's nae use, feyther. I'm no' gaein' to gie in to the wean. Ye've been tellin' yer stories to him nicht after nicht for dear knows how long, and he's gettin' to expect them.

DAVID. Why should he no' expect them?

LIZZIE. It disna do for weans to count on things so. He's layin' up a sad disappointment for himself yin o' these days.

DAVID. He's gettin' a sad disappointment the noo. Och, come on, Lizzie. I'm no' gaein' to dee just yet, an' ye can break him off gradually when I begin to look like to.

LIZZIE. Who's talkin' o' yer deein', feyther?

DAVID. Ye were speakin' o' the disappointment he was layin' up for himself if he got to count on me —

LIZZIE. I wasna thinkin' o' yer decin', feyther — only — it's no guid for a bairn —

DAVID. Where's the harm in my giein' him a bit story before he gangs tae his bed?

LIZZIE. I'm no sayin' there's ony harm in it this yinst, feyther; but it's no richt to gae on nicht after nicht wi' never a break —

DAVID. Whit wey is it no richt if there's nae harm in it?

LIZZIE. It's giein' in to the wean.

DAVID. Whit wey should ye no' gie in to him if there's nae harm in it?

LIZZIE (*keeping her patience with difficulty*). Because it gets him into the habit.

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DAVID. But why should he no' get into the habit if there's nae harm in it?

(*John at the table chuckles. Lizzie gives him a look, but he meets it not*)

LIZZIE. Really, feyther, ye might be a wean yerself, ye're that persistent.

DAVID. No, Lizzie, I'm no' persistent, I'm reasoning wi' ye. Ye said there was nae harm in my tellin' him a bit story, an' now ye say I'm not to because it'll get him into the habit; an' what I'm askin' ye is, where's the harm o' his gettin' into the habit if there's nae harm in it?

LIZZIE. Oh, aye; ye can be gey clever, twistin' the words in my mouth, feyther, but richt is richt, an' wrang's wrang, for all yer cleverness.

DAVID (*earnestly*). I'm no bein' clever ava, Lizzie, — no' the noo, — I'm just tryin' to make ye see that, if ye admit there's nae harm in a thing, ye canna say there's ony harm in it, an' (*pathetically*) I'm wantin' to tell wee Alexander a bit story before he gangs to his bed.

JOHN (*aside to her*). Och, wumman —

LIZZIE. T'ts, John; ye'd gie in tac onybody if they were just persistent enough.

JOHN. He's an auld man.

LIZZIE (*really exasperated*). I ken fine he's an auld man, John, and ye're a young yin, an' Alexander's gaein' to be anither, an' I'm a lone wumman among the lot o' ye, but I'm no' gaein' to gie in to —

JOHN (*bringing a fresh mind to bear upon the argument*). Efter a', Lizzie, there's nae harm —

LIZZIE (*almost with a scream of anger*). Och, now you've staisted, have you? Harm. Harm. Harm. You're talkin' about *harm*, and I'm talking about richt an' wrang. You'd see your son grow up a drunken keelie, an' mebbe a thief an' a murderer, so long as you could say there was nae harm in it.

DAVID (*expostulating with some cause*). But I cudna say there was nae harm in that, Lizzie, an' I wudna. Only when there's nae harm —

LIZZIE. Och. (*Exits, calling off to the cause of the trouble.*) Are ye in yer bed yet, Alexander?

(*Shuts door with a click.*)

DAVID (*standing on hearth-rug and shaking his head more in sorrow than in anger*). She's no reasonable, ye ken, John; she disna argue fair. I'm no complaining o' her mither, but it's a wee thing hard that the only twa women I've known to be really chatty an' argumentative with should ha' been just like that. An' me that fond o' women's society.

(*He lowers himself into his chair.*)

JOHN. They're all like it.

DAVID (*judiciously*). I wudna go sae far as to say that, John. Ye see, I've only kent they twa to study carefully — an' it's no fair to judge the whole sex by just the twa examples, an' it were — (*Running on*) But it's gey hard, an' I was wantin' to tell wee Alexander a special fine story the nicht. (*Removes glasses and blinks his eyes.*) Aweel.

JOHN (*comforting*) Mebbe the morn —

DAVID. If it's no richt the nicht, it'll no be richt the morn's nicht.

JOHN. Ye canna say that, feyther. It wasna wrang last nicht.

DAVID (*bitterly*). Mebbe it was, an' Lizzie had no' foun' it out.

JOHN. Aw, noo, feyther, dinna get saurcastic.

DAVID (*between anger and tears, weakly*). I canna help it. I'm black affrontit. I was wantin' to tell wee Alexander a special fine story the nicht, an' now here's Lizzie wi' her richt's richt an' wrang's wrang — Och, there's nae reason in the women.

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JOHN. We has to gie in to them though.

DAVID. Aye. That's why.

(There is a pause. The old man picks up his paper again and settles his glasses on his nose. JOHN rises, and with a spill from the mantelpiece lights the gas there, which he then bends to throw the light to the old man's advantage.)

DAVID. Thank ye, John. Do ye hear him?

JOHN *(erect on hearth-rug)*. Who?

DAVID. Wee Alexander.

JOHN. No.

DAVID. Greetin' his heart out.

JOHN. Och, he's no greetin'. Lizzie's wi' him.

DAVID. I ken fine Lizzie's wi' him, but he's greetin' for a' her. He was wantin' to hear yon story o' the kelpies up to Cross Hill wi' the tram — *(Breaking his mood impatiently)* Och.

JOHN *(crossing to table and lighting up there)*. It's gettin' dark gey early. We'll shin be hacin' tea by the gas.

DAVID *(rustling his paper)*. Aye — *(Suddenly)* There never was a female philosopher, ye ken, John.

JOHN. Was there no'?

DAVID. No. *(Angrily, in a gust)* An' there never will be! *(Then more calmly)* An' yet there's an' awful lot o' philosophy about women, John.

JOHN. Aye?

DAVID. Och, aye. They're that unreasonable, an' yet ye canna reason them down; an' they're that weak, an' yet ye canna make them gie in tae ye. Of course, ye'll say ye canna reason doon a stane, or make a clod o' earth gie in tae ye.

JOHN. Will I?

DAVID. Aye. An' ye'll be richt. But then I'll tell ye a stane will na answer ye back, an' a clod of earth will na try to withstand ye, so how can ye argue them down?

JOHN (*convinced*) Ye canna.

DAVID. Richt! Ye canna' But a wumman *will* answer ye back, an' she *will* stand against ye, an' *yet* ye canna argue her down though ye have strength an' reason on your side an' she's talkin' naething but blether about richt's richt an' wrang's wrang, an' sendin' a poor bairn off t' his bed i' the yin room an' leavin' her auld feyther all alone by the fire in anither an' — ye ken — Philosophy —

(*He ceases to speak and wipes his glasses again. JOHN, intensely troubled, tiptoes up to the door and opens it a foot. The wails of ALEXANDER can be heard muffled by a farther door. JOHN calls off*)

JOHN. Lizzie.

(LIZZIE immediately comes into sight outside the door with a "Shsh.")

JOHN. Yer feyther's greetin'.

LIZZIE (*with a touch of exasperation*). Och, I'm no heedin'! There's another wean in there greetin' too, an' I'm no heedin' him neither, an' he's greetin' twicet as loud as the auld yin.

JOHN (*shocked*). Ye're heartless, wumman.

LIZZIE (*with patience*). No, I'm no' heartless, John; but there's too much heart in this family, an' someone's got to use their heid.

(DAVID cranes round the side of his chair to catch what they are saying. She stops and comes to him kindly but with womanly firmness)

LIZZIE. I'm vexed ye should be disappointed, feyther, but ye see, don't ye —

(A singularly piercing wail from ALEXANDER goes up. LIZZIE rushes to silence him.)

LIZZIE. Mercy! The neighbors will think we're murderin' him.

(The door closes behind her.)

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DAVID (*nodding for a space as he revolves the woman's attitude*). Ye hear that, John?

JOHN. Whit?

DAVID (*with quiet irony*). She's vexed I should be disappointed. The wumman thinks she's richt! Women always think they're richt — mebbe it's that that makes them that obstinate. (*With the ghost of a twinkle*) She's feart o' the neighbors, though.

JOHN (*stolidly*). A' women are feart o' the neighbors.

DAVID (*reverting*). Pur wee man I tellt ye he was greetin', John. He's disappointed fine. (*Pondering*) D' ye ken whit I'm thinkin', John?

JOHN. Whit?

DAVID. I'm thinkin' he's too young to get his ain way, an' I'm too auld, an' it's a fine thocht!

JOHN. Aye?

DAVID. Aye. I never thocht of it before, but that's what it is. He's no' come to it yet, an' I'm past it. (*Suddenly*) What's the most important thing in life, John?

(JOHN opens his mouth — and shuts it again unused.)

DAVID. Ye ken perfectly well. What is it ye're wantin' a' the time?

JOHN. Different things.

DAVID (*satisfied*). Aye — different things! But ye want them a', do ye no'?

JOHN. Aye.

DAVID. If ye had yer ain way ye'd hae them a', eh?

JOHN. I wud that.

DAVID (*triumphant*). Then is that no' what ye want: yer ain way?

JOHN (*enlightened*). Losh!

DAVID (*warming to it*). That's what life is, John — gettin' yer ain way. First ye're born, an' ye canna dae anything but cry; but God's given yer mither ears an' ye get

yer way by just cryin' for it. (*Hastily, anticipating criticism*) I ken that's no exactly in keeping with what I've been saying aboot Alexander—but a new-born bairnie's an awfu' delicate thing, an' the Lord gets it past its infancy by a dispensation of Providence very unsettling to oor poor human understandings. Ye'll notice the weans cease gettin' their wey by juist greetin' for it as shin as they're old enough to seek it otherwise.

JOHN. The habit hangs on to them whiles.

DAVID. It does that. (*With a twinkle*) An' mebbe, if God's gi'en yer neighbors ears an' ye live close, ye'll get yer wey by a dispensation o' Providence a while longer. But there's things ye'll hae to do for yerself gin ye want to — an' ye will. Ye'll want to hold oot yer hand, an' ye will hold oot yer hand; an' ye'll want to stand up and walk, and ye *will* stand up and walk; an' ye'll want to dae as ye please, and ye *will* dae as ye please; and then ye are practised an' lernt in the art of gettin' ycr ain way — and ye're a man!

JOHN. Man, feyther — ye're wonderful!

DAVID (*complacently*). I'm a philosopher, John. But it goes on mebbe.

JOHN. Aye?

DAVID. Aye: mebbe ye think ye'd like to make ither folk mind ye an' yer way, an' ye try, an' if it comes off ye're a big man an' mebbe the master o' a vessel wi' three men an' a boy under ye, as I was, John. (*Dropping into the minor*) An' then ye come doon the hill.

JOHN (*apprehensively*). Doon the hill?

DAVID. Aye — doon to mebbe wantin' to tell a wean a bit story before he gangs tae his bed, an' ye canna dae even that. An' then a while more an' ye want to get to yer feet an' walk, and ye canna; an' a while more an' ye want to lift up yer hand, an' ye canna — an' in a while more ye're just forgotten an' done wi'.

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JOHN. Aw, feyther!

DAVID. Dinna look sae troubled, John. I'm no' afraid to dee when my time comes. It's these hints that I'm done wi' before I'm dead that I dinna like.

JOHN What'n hints?

DAVID. Well — Lizzie an' her richt's richt and wrang's wrang when I think o' tellin' wee Alexander a bit story before he gangs tae his bed.

JOHN (*gently*). Ye are a wec thing persistent, feyther.

DAVID. No, I'm no' persistent, John. I've gied in. I'm a philosopher, John, an' a philosopher kens when he's done wi'.

JOHN. Aw, feyther!

DAVID (*getting lower and lower*). It's gey interesting, philosophy, John, an' the only philosophy worth thinkin' about is the philosophy of growing old — because that's what we're a' doing, a' living things. There's nae philosophy in a stane, John; he's juist a stane, an' in a hundred years he'll be juist a stane still — unless he's broken' up, an' then he'll be juist not a stane, but he'll no' ken what's happened to him, because he didna break up gradual and first lose his boat an' then his hoose, an' then hae his wee grandson taken away when he was for tellin' him a bit story before he gangs tae his bed. — It's yon losing yer grip bit by bit and kennin' that yer losin' it that makes a philosopher, John.

JOHN. If I kennt what ye meant by philosophy, feyther, I'd be better able to follow ye.

(LIZZIE enters quietly and closes door after her.)

JOHN. Is he asleep?

LIZZIE. No, he's no' asleep, but I've shut both doors, and the neighbors canna hear him.

JOHN. Aw, Lizzie —

LIZZIE (*sharply*). John —

DAVID. Whit was I tellin' ye, John, about weans gettin'

their ain way if the neighbors had ears an' they hved close?
Was I no' richt?

LIZZIE (*answering for JOHN with some acerbity*). Aye, ye were richt, feyther, nae doot, but we dinna live that close here, an' the neighbors canna hear him at the back o' the hoose.

DAVID. Mebbe that's why ye changed Alexander into the parlor an' gied me the bed in here when it began to get cold —

LIZZIE (*hurt*). Aw, no, feyther; I brought ye in here to be warmer —

DAVID (*placably*). I believe ye, wumman — (*with a faint twinkle*) — but it's turned oot luckily, has it no'?

(DAVID waits for a reply but gets none. LIZZIE fetches needlework from the dresser drawer and sits above table. DAVID's face and voice take on a more thoughtful tone.)

DAVID (*musing*). Puir wee man! If he was in here you'd no' be letting him greet his heart oot where onybody could hear him Wud ye?

LIZZIE (*calmly*). Mebbe I'd no'.

JOHN. Ye ken fine ye'd no', wumman.

LIZZIE. John, thread my needle an' dinna take feyther's part against me.

JOHN (*surprised*). I'm no'.

LIZZIE. No, I ken ye're no meanin' to, but you men are that thrang —

(*She is interrupted by a loud squall from DAVID, which he maintains, eyes shut, chair-arms gripped, and mouth open, for nearly half a minute, before he cuts it off abruptly and looks at the startled couple at the table.*)

LIZZIE. Mercy, feyther, whit's wrang wi' ye?

DAVID (*collectedly*). There's naethin' wrang wi' me, Lizzie, except that I'm wantin' to tell wee Alexander a bit story —

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LIZZIE (*firmly but very kindly*). But ye're no' goin' to —
(She breaks off in alarm as her father opens his mouth
preparatory to another yell, which however he postpones to speak to JOHN)

DAVID. Ye mind whit I was saying aboot the dispensation o' Providence to help weans till they could try for theirselves, John?

JOHN. Aye.

DAVID. Did it no' occur to ye then that there ought to be some sort of dispensation to look after the auld yins who were past it?

JOHN. No.

DAVID. Aweel — it didna occur to me at the time —
(and he lets off another prolonged wail).

LIZZIE (*going to him*). Shsh! Feyther! The neighbors will hear ye!!!

DAVID (*desisting as before*). I ken fine; I'm no' at the back of the hoose. (*Shorter wail.*)

LIZZIE (*almost in tears*). They'll be coming to ask.

DAVID. Let them. They'll no' ask me. (*Squall.*)

LIZZIE. Feyther — ye're no' behaving well. John —

JOHN. Aye?

LIZZIE (*helplessly*). Naething — feyther, stop it. They'll think ye're clean daft.

DAVID (*ceasing to howl and speaking with gravity*). I ken it fine, Lizzie; an' it's no easy for a man who has been respectit an' lookit up to a' his life to be thought daft at eighty-three; but the most important thing in life is to get yer ain way. (*Resumes wailing.*)

LIZZIE (*puzzled, to JOHN*). Whit's that?

JOHN. It's his philosophy that he was talking aboot.

DAVID (*firmly*). An' I'm gaein' to tell wee Alexander yon bit story, tho' they think me daft for it.

LIZZIE. But it's no' for his ain guid, feyther. I've telt ye so, but ye wudna listen.

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DAVID. I wudna listen, wumman! It was you wudna listen to me when I axed ye whit harm — (*Chuckles.* — *Checking himself*) No! I'm no gaein' to hae that ower again. I've gied up arguing wi' women. I'm juist gaein' tae greet loud an' sair till wee Alexander's brought in here to hae his bit story, an' if the neighbors — (*Loud squall*)

LIZZIE (*aside to JOHN*). He's fair daft'

JOHN (*aghast*). Ye'd no send him to —

LIZZIE (*reproachfully*). John'

(*A louder squall from the old man.*)

LIZZIE (*beating her hands together distractedly*). He'll be — We'll — He'll — Och!!! (*Resigned and beaten*) John, go and bring wee Alexander in here.

(*JOHN is off like a shot. The opening of the door of the other room can be told by the burst of ALEXANDER's voice. The old man's wails have stopped the second his daughter capitulated. JOHN returns with ALEXANDER and bears him to his grandfather's waiting knee. The boy's tears and howls have ceased and he is smiling triumphantly. He is of course in his night-shirt and a blanket, which Grandpa wraps round him, turning toward the fire.*)

LIZZIE (*looking on with many nods of the head and smacks of the lips*). There you are! That's the kind o' boy he is. Greet his heart oot for a thing an' stop the moment he gets it.

) DAVID. Dae ye expect him to gae on after he's got it? Ah, but, Alexander, ye didna get it yer lanc this time; it took the twa o' us. An' hard work it was for the Auld Yin! •Man! (*Playing hoarse*) I doot I've enough voice left for a — (*Bursting out very loud and making the boy laugh*.) Aweel! Whit's it gacin' to be — eh?

[CURTAIN]

SPREADING THE NEWS¹

LADY GREGORY

CHARACTERS

BARTLEY FALLON	JAMES RYAN
MRS. FALLON	MRS. TARPEY
JACK SMITH	MRS. TULLY
SHAWN EARLY	JOE MULDOON, a policeman
TIM CASEY	A REMOVABLE MAGISTRATE

SCENE: The outskirts of a Fair. An Apple Stall. Mrs. TARPEY sitting at it. MAGISTRATE and POLICEMAN enter.

MAGISTRATE. So that is the Fair Green. Cattle and sheep and mud. No system. What a repulsive sight!

POLICEMAN. That is so, indeed.

MAGISTRATE. I suppose there is a good deal of disorder in this place?

POLICEMAN. There is.

MAGISTRATE. Common assault?

POLICEMAN. It's common enough.

MAGISTRATE. Agrarian crime, no doubt?

POLICEMAN. That is so.

MAGISTRATE. Boycotting? Maiming of cattle? Firing into houses?

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POLICEMAN. There was one time, and there might be again.

MAGISTRATE. That is bad. Does it go any farther than that?

POLICEMAN. Far enough, indeed.

MAGISTRATE. Homicide, then! This district has been shamefully neglected! I will change all that. When I was in the Andaman Islands, my system never failed. Yes, yes, I will change all that. What has that woman on her stall?

POLICEMAN. Apples mostly — and sweets.

MAGISTRATE. Just see if there are any unlicensed goods underneath — spirits or the like. We had evasions of the salt tax in the Andaman Islands.

POLICEMAN (*sniffing cautiously and upsetting a heap of apples*). I see no spirits here — or salt

MAGISTRATE (*to MRS TARPEY*). Do you know this town well, my good woman?

MRS. TARPEY (*holding out some apples*). A penny the half-dozen, your honor

POLICEMAN (*shouting*). The gentleman is asking do you know the town! He's the new magistrate!

MRS. TARPEY (*rising and ducking*). Do I know the town? I do, to be sure.

MAGISTRATE (*shouting*). What is its chief business?

MRS. TARPEY. Business, is it? What business would the people here have but to be minding one another's business?

MAGISTRATE. I mean what trade have they?

MRS. TARPEY. Not a trade. No trade at all but to be talking.

MAGISTRATE. I shall learn nothing here.

(JAMES RYAN comes in, pipe in mouth. Seeing MAGISTRATE, he retreats quickly, taking pipe from mouth.)

MAGISTRATE. The smoke from that man's pipe had a

greenish look; he may be growing unlicensed tobacco at home. I wish I had brought my telescope to this district. Come to the post-office; I will telegraph for it. I found it very useful in the Andaman Islands.

(MAGISTRATE and POLICEMAN go out left.)

MRS. TARPEY. Bad luck to Jo Muldoon, knocking my apples this way and that way. (*Begins arranging them.*) Showing off he was to the new magistrate.

(Enter BARTLEY FALLON and MRS. FALLON.)

BARTLEY. Indeed it's a poor country and a scarce country to be living in. But I'm thinking if I went to America it's long ago the day I'd be dead!

MRS. FALLON. So you might, indeed.

(She puts her basket on a barrel and begins putting parcels in it, taking them from under her cloak.)

BARTLEY. And it's a great expense for a poor man to be buried in America.

MRS. FALLON. Never fear, Bartley Fallon, but I'll give you a good burying the day you'll die.

BARTLEY. Maybe it's yourself will be buried in the graveyard of Cloonmara before me, Mary Fallon, and I myself that will be dying unbeknownst some night, and no one a-near me. And the cat itself may be gone straying through the country, and the mice squealing over the quilt.

MRS. FALLON. Leave off talking of dying. It might be twenty years you'll be living yet.

BARTLEY (*with a deep sigh*). I'm thinking if I'll be living at the end of twenty years, it's a very old man I'll be then!

MRS. TARPEY (*turns and sees them*). Good-morrow, Bartley Fallon; good-morrow, Mrs. Fallon. Well, Bartley, you'll find no cause for complaining to-day; they are all saying it was a good fair.

BARTLEY (*raising his voice*). It was not a good fair, Mrs. Tarpey. It was a scattered sort of a fair. If we did n't

expect more, we got less. That's the way with me always: whatever I have to sell goes down and whatever I have to buy goes up. If there's ever any misfortune coming to this world, it's on myself it pitches, like a flock of crows on seed potatoes.

MRS. FALLON. Leave off talking of misfortunes, and listen to Jack Smith that is coming the way, and he singing.

(*Voice of JACK SMITH heard singing*)

I thought, my first love,
 There'd be but one house between you and me,
 And I thought I would find
 Yourself coaxing my child on your knee.
 Over the tide
 I would leap with the leap of a swan,
 Till I came to the side
 Of the wife of the red-haired man!

(JACK SMITH comes in; he is a red-haired man, and is carrying a hayfork.)

MRS. TARPEY. That should be a good song if I had my hearing.

MRS. FALLON (*shouting*). It's "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

MRS. TARPEY. I know it well. That's the song that has a skin on it!

(*She turns her back to them and goes on arranging her apples.*)

MRS. FALLON. Where's herself, Jack Smith?

JACK SMITH. She was delayed with her washing; bleaching the clothes on the hedge she is, and she dare n't leave them, with all the tinkers that do be passing to the fair. It is n't to the fair I came myself, but up to the Five-Acre Meadow I'm going, where I have a contract for the hay. We'll get a share of it into tramps to-day.

(*He lays down hayfork and lights his pipe.*)

BARTLEY. You will not get it into tramps to-day. The

rain will be down on it by evening, and on myself too. It's seldom I ever started on a journey but the rain would come down on me before I'd find any place of shelter.

JACK SMITH. If it did n't itself, Bartley, it is my belief you would carry a leaky pail on your head in place of a hat, the way you'd not be without some cause of complaining.

(*A voice heard: "Go on, now, go on out o' that. Go on, I say."*)

JACK SMITH. Look at that young mare of Pat Ryan's that is backing into Shaughnessy's bullocks with the dint of the crowd! Don't be daunted, Pat, I'll give you a hand with her. (He goes out, leaving his hayfork.)

MRS. FALLON. It's time for ourselves to be going home. I have all I bought put in the basket. Look at there, Jack Smith's hayfork he left after him! He'll be wanting it. (*Calls*) Jack Smith! Jack Smith! — He's gone through the crowd; hurry after him, Bartley, he'll be wanting it.

BARTLEY. I'll do that. This is no safe place to be leaving it. (He takes up fork awkwardly and upsets the basket.) Look at that now! If there is any basket in the fair upset, it must be our own basket! (He goes out to right.)

MRS. FALLON. Get out of that! It is your own fault, it is. Talk of misfortunes and misfortunes will come. Glory be! Look at my new egg-cups rolling in every part — and my two pound of sugar with the paper broke —

MRS. TARPEY (*turning from stall*). God help us, Mrs. Fallon, what happened your basket?

MRS. FALLON. It's himself that knocked it down, bad manners to him. (*Putting things up*) My grand sugar that's destroyed, and he'll not drink his tea without it. I had best go back to the shop for more, much good may it do him!

(Enter Tim Casey.)

TIM CASEY. Where is Bartley Fallon, Mrs. Fallon? I want a word with him before he'll leave the fair. I was afraid he might have gone home by this, for he's a temperate man.

MRS. FALLON. I wish he did go home! It'd be best for me if he went home straight from the fair green, or if he never came with me at all! Where is he, is it? He's gone up the road (*jerks elbow*) following Jack Smith with a hayfork.

(*She goes out to left.*)

TIM CASEY. Following Jack Smith with a hayfork! Did ever anyone hear the like of that. (*Shouts*) Did you hear that news, Mrs. Tarpey?

MRS. TARPEY. I heard no news at all.

TIM CASEY. Some dispute I suppose it was that rose between Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon, and it seems Jack made off, and Bartley is following him with a hayfork!

MRS. TARPEY. Is he now? Well, that was quick work! It's not ten minutes since the two of them were here, Bartley going home and Jack going to the Five-Acre Meadow; and I had my apples to settle up, that Jo Muldoon of the police had scattered, and when I looked round again Jack Smith was gone, and Bartley Fallon was gone, and Mrs. Fallon's basket upset, and all in it strewed upon the ground — the tea here — the two pound of sugar there — the egg-cups there. Look, now, what a great hardship the deafness puts upon me, that I did n't hear the commencement of the fight! Wait till I tell James Ryan that I see below; he is a neighbor of Bartley's; it would be a pity if he would n't hear the news!

(*She goes out. Enter SHAWN EARLY and MRS. TULLY.*)

TIM CASEY. Listen, Shawn Early! Listen, Mrs. Tully, to the news! Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon had a falling out, and Jack knocked Mrs. Fallon's basket into the road,

and Bartley made an attack on him with a hayfork, and away with Jack, and Bartley after him. Look at the sugar here yet on the road!

SHAWN EARLY. Do you tell me so? Well, that's a queer thing, and Bartley Fallon so quiet a man!

MRS. TULLY. I would n't wonder at all. I would never think well of a man that would have that sort of a moldering look. It's likely he has overtaken Jack by this.

(Enter JAMES RYAN and MRS TARPEY)

JAMES RYAN. That is great news Mrs. Tarpey was telling me! I suppose that's what brought the police and the magistrate up this way. I was wondering to see them in it a while ago.

SHAWN EARLY. The police after them? Bartley Fallon must have injured Jack so. They would n't meddle in a fight that was only for show!

MRS. TULLY. Why would n't he injure him? There was many a man killed with no more of a weapon than a hayfork.

JAMES RYAN. Wait till I run north as far as Kelly's bar to spread the news!

(He goes out.)

TIM CASEY. I'll go tell Jack Smith's first cousin that is standing there south of the church after selling his lambs.

(Goes out.)

MRS. TULLY. I'll go telling a few of the neighbors I see beyond to the west.

(Goes out.)

SHAWN EARLY. I'll give word of it beyond at the east of the green.

(Is going out when MRS TARPEY seizes hold of him.)

MRS. TARPEY. Stop a minute, Shawn Early, and tell me did you see red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary, in any place?

SHAWN EARLY. I did. At her own house she was, drying clothes on the hedge as I passed.

MRS. TARPEY. What did you say she was doing?

SHAWN EARLY (*breaking away*). Laying out a sheet on the hedge.

(*He goes.*)

MRS. TARPEY. Laying out a sheet for the dead! The Lord have mercy on us! Jack Smith dead, and his wife laying out a sheet for his burying! (*Calls out*) Why did n't you tell me that before, Shawn Early? Is n't the deafness the great hardship? Half the world might be dead without me knowing of it or getting word of it at all! (*She sits down and rocks herself.*) O my poor Jack Smith! To be going to his work so nice and so hearty, and to be left stretched on the ground in the full light of the day!

(*Enter TIM CASEY.*)

TIM CASEY. What is it, Mrs. Tarpey? What happened since?

MRS. TARPEY. O my poor Jack Smith!

TIM CASEY. Did Bartley overtake him?

MRS. TARPEY. O the poor man!

TIM CASEY. Is it killed he is?

MRS. TARPEY. Stretched in the Five-Acre Meadow!

TIM CASEY. The Lord have mercy on us! Is that a fact?

MRS. TARPEY. Without the rites of the Church or a ha'porth!

TIM CASEY. Who was telling you?

MRS. TARPEY. And the wife laying out a sheet for his corpse. (*Sits up and wipes her eyes.*) I suppose they'll wake him the same as another?

(*Enter MRS. TULLY, SHAWN EARLY, and JAMES RYAN.*)

MRS. TULLY. There is great talk about this work in every quarter of the fair.

MRS. TARPEY. Ochone! cold and dead. And myself maybe the last he was speaking to!

JAMES RYAN. The Lord save us! Is it dead he is?

TIM CASEY. Dead surely, and the wife getting provision for the wake.

SHAWN EARLY. Well, now, had n't Bartley Fallon great venom in him?

MRS. TULLY. You may be sure he had some cause. Why would he have made an end of him if he had not? (*To Mrs. Tarpey, raising her voice*) What was it rose the dispute at all, Mrs. Tarpey?

MRS. TARPEY. Not a one of me knows. The last I saw of them, Jack Smith was standing there, and Bartley Fallon was standing there, quiet and easy, and he listening to "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

MRS. TULLY. Do you hear that, Tim Casey? Do you hear that, Shawn Early and James Ryan? Bartley Fallon was here this morning listening to red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary that was! Listening to her and whispering with her! It was she started the fight so!

SHAWN EARLY. She must have followed him from her own house. It is likely some person roused him.

TIM CASEY. I never knew, before, Bartley Fallon was great with Jack Smith's wife.

MRS. TULLY. How would you know it? Sure it's not in the streets they would be calling it. If Mrs. Fallon did n't know of it, and if I that have the next house to them did n't know of it, and if Jack Smith himself did n't know of it, it is not likely you would know of it, Tim Casey.

SHAWN EARLY. Let Bartley Fallon take charge of her from this out so, and let him provide for her. It is little pity she will get from any person in this parish.

TIM CASEY. How can he take charge of her? Sure he has a wife of his own. Sure you don't think he'd turn souper and marry her in a Protestant church?

JAMES RYAN. It would be easy for him to marry her if he brought her to America.

SHAWN EARLY. With or without Kitty Keary, believe me, it is for America he's making at this minute. I saw the new magistrate and Jo Muldoon of the police going into the post-office as I came up — there was hurry on them — you may be sure it was to telegraph they went, the way he'll be stopped in the docks at Queenstown!

MRS. TULLY. It's likely Kitty Keary is gone with him, and not minding a sheet or a wake at all. The poor man, to be deserted by his own wife, and the breath hardly gone out yet from his body that is lying bloody in the field!

(Enter MRS. FALLON.)

MRS. FALLON. What is it the whole of the town is talking about? And what is it you yourselves are talking about? Is it about my man Bartley Fallon you are talking? Is it lies about him you are telling, saying that he went killing Jack Smith? My grief that ever he came into this place at all!

JAMES RYAN. Be easy now, Mrs. Fallon. Sure there is no one at all in the whole fair but is sorry for you!

MRS. FALLON. Sorry for me, is it? Why would anyone be sorry for me? Let you be sorry for yourselves, and that there may be shame on you forever and at the day of judgment, for the words you are saying and the lies you are telling to take away the character of my poor man, and to take the good name off of him, and to drive him to destruction! That is what you are doing!

SHAWN EARLY. Take comfort now, Mrs. Fallon. The police are not so smart as they think. Sure he might give them the slip yet, the same as Lynchehaun.

MRS. TULLY. If they do get him, and if they do put a rope around his neck, there is no one can say he does not deserve it!

MRS. FALLON. Is that what you are saying, Bridget Tully, and is that what you think? I tell you it's too much talk you have, making yourself out to be such a great one, and to be running down every respectable person! A rope, is it? It is n't much of a rope was needed to tie up your own furniture the day you came into Martin Tully's house, and you never bringing as much as a blanket, or a penny, or a suit of clothes with you, and I myself bringing seventy pounds and two feather beds. And now you are stiffer than a woman would have a hundred pounds! It is too much talk the whole of you have. A rope is it? I tell you the whole of this town is full of liars and schemers that would hang you up for half a glass of whiskey (*turning to go*). People they are you would n't believe as much as daylight from, without you'd get up to have a look at it yourself. Killing Jack Smith indeed! Where are you at all, Bartley, till I bring you out of this? My nice quiet little man! My decent comrade! He that is as kind and as harmless as an innocent beast of the field! He'll be doing no harm at all if he'll shed the blood of some of you after this day's work! That much would be no harm at all. (*'alls out*) Bartley! Bartley Fallon! Where are you? (*Going out*) Did anyone see Bartley Fallon?

(*All turn to look after her.*)

JAMES RYAN. It is hard for her to believe any such a thing, God help her!

(Enter BARTLEY FALLON from right, carrying hayfork.)

BARTLEY. It is what I often said to myself, if there is ever any misfortune coming to this world it is on myself it is sure to come!

(*All turn round and face him.*)

BARTLEY. To be going about with this fork and to find no one to take it, and no place to leave it down, and I wanting to be gone out of this — Is that you, Shawn Early?

(*Holds out fork.*) It's well I met you. You have no call to be leaving the fair for a while the way I have, and how can I go till I'm rid of this fork? Will you take it and keep it until such time as Jack Smith —

SHAWN EARLY (*Backing*). I will not take it, Bartley Fallon, I'm very thankful to you!

BARTLEY (*turning to apple stall*). Look at it now, Mrs. Tarpey, it was here I got it; let me thrust it in under the stall. It will lie there safe enough, and no one will take notice of it until such time as Jack Smith —

MRS. TARPEY. Take your fork out of that! Is it to put trouble on me and to destroy me you want? putting it there for the police to be rooting it out maybe

(*Thrusts him back.*)

BARTLEY. That is a very unneighborly thing for you to do, Mrs. Tarpey. Had n't I enough care on me with that fork before this, running up and down with it like the swinging of a clock, and afeard to lay it down in any place! I wish I'd never touched it or meddled with it at all!

JAMES RYAN It is a pity, indeed, you ever did.

BARTLEY. Will you yourself take it, James Ryan? You were always a neighborly man.

JAMES RYAN (*Backing*). There is many a thing I would do for you, Bartley Fallon, but I won't do that!

SHAWN EARLY. I tell you there is no man will give you any help or any encouragement for this day's work. If it was something agrarian now —

BARTLEY. If no one at all will take it, maybe it's best to give it up to the police.

TIM CASEY. There'd be a welcome for it with them surely!

(*Laughter.*)

MRS. TULLY. And it is to the police Kitty Keary herself will be brought.

MRS. TARPEY (*rocking to and fro*). I wonder now who will take the expense of the wake for poor Jack Smith?

BARTLEY. The wake for Jack Smith!

TIM CASEY. Why would n't he get a wake as well as another? Would you begrudge him that much?

BARTLEY. Red Jack Smith dead! Who was telling you?

SHAWN EARLY. The whole town knows of it by this.

BARTLEY. Do they say what way did he die?

JAMES RYAN. You don't know that yourself, I suppose, Bartley Fallon? You don't know he was followed and that he was laid dead with the stab of a hayfork?

BARTLEY. The stab of a hayfork!

SHAWN EARLY. You don't know, I suppose, that the body was found in the Five-Acre Meadow?

BARTLEY. The Five-Acre Meadow!

TIM CASEY. It is likely you don't know that the police are after the man that did it?

BARTLEY. The man that did it!

MRS. TULLY. You don't know, maybe, that he was made away with for the sake of Kitty Keary, his wife?

BARTLEY. Kitty Keary, his wife! (*Sits down bewildered*.)

MRS. TULLY. And what have you to say now, Bartley Fallon?

BARTLEY (*crossing himself*). I to bring that fork here, and to find that news before me! It is much if I can ever stir from this place at all, or reach as far as the road!

TIM CASEY. Look, boys, at the new magistrate, and Jo Muldoon along with him! It's best for us to quit this.

SHAWN EARLY. That is so. It is best not to be mixed in this business at all.

JAMES RYAN. Bad as he is, I would n't like to be an informer against any man.

(*All hurry away except MRS. TARPEY, who remains behind her stall. Enter MAGISTRATE and POLICEMAN.*)

MAGISTRATE. I knew the district was in a bad state, but I did not expect to be confronted with a murder at the first fair I came to.

POLICEMAN. I am sure you did not, indeed.

MAGISTRATE. It was well I had not gone home. I caught a few words here and there that roused my suspicions.

POLICEMAN. So they would, too.

MAGISTRATE. You heard the same story from everyone you asked?

POLICEMAN. The same story — or if it was not altogether the same, anyway it was no less than the first story.

MAGISTRATE. What is that man doing? He is sitting alone with a hayfork. He has a guilty look. The murder was done with a hayfork!

POLICEMAN (*in a whisper*). That's the very man they say did the act, Bartley Fallon himself!

MAGISTRATE. He must have found escape difficult — he is trying to brazen it out. A convict in the Andaman Islands tried the same game, but he could not escape my system! Stand aside — Don't go far — Have the handcuffs ready. (*He walks up to BARTLEY, folds his arms, and stands before him.*) Here, my man, do you know anything of John Smith?

BARTLEY. Of John Smith! Who is he, now?

POLICEMAN. Jack Smith, sir — Red Jack Smith!

MAGISTRATE (*coming a step nearer and tapping him on the shoulder*). Where is Jack Smith?

BARTLEY (*with a deep sigh, and shaking his head slowly*). Where is he, indeed?

MAGISTRATE. What have you to tell?

BARTLEY. It is where he was this morning, standing in this spot, singing his share of songs — no, but lighting his pipe — scraping a match on the sole of his shoe —

MAGISTRATE. I ask you, for the third time, where is he?

BARTLEY. I would n't like to say that. It is a great mystery, and it is hard to say of any man, did he earn hatred or love.

MAGISTRATE. Tell me all you know.

BARTLEY. All that I know — Well, there are the three estates; there is Limbo, and there is Purgatory, and there is —

MAGISTRATE. Nonsense! This is trifling! Get to the point.

BARTLEY. Maybe you don't hold with the clergy so? That is the teaching of the clergy. Maybe you hold with the old people. It is what they do be saying, that the shadow goes wandering, and the soul is tired, and the body is taking a rest — The shadow! (*Starts up.*) I was nearly sure I saw Jack Smith not ten minutes ago at the corner of the forge, and I lost him again — Was it his ghost I saw, do you think?

MAGISTRATE (*to POLICEMAN*). Conscience-struck! He will confess all now!

BARTLEY. His ghost to come before me! It is likely it was on account of the fork! I to have it and he to have no way to defend himself the time he met with his death!

MAGISTRATE (*to POLICEMAN*). I must note down his words. (*Takes out notebook. To BARTLEY*) I warn you that your words are being noted.

BARTLEY. If I had ha' run faster in the beginning, this terror would not be on me at the latter end! Maybe he will cast it up against me at the day of judgment — I would n't wonder at all at that.

MAGISTRATE (*writing*). At the day of judgment —

BARTLEY. It was soon for his ghost to appear to me — is it coming after me always by day it will be, and stripping the clothes off in 'the nighttime? — I would n't wonder at all at that, being as I am an unfortunate man!

MAGISTRATE (*sternly*). Tell me this truly. What was the motive of this crime?

BARTLEY. The motive, is it?

MAGISTRATE. Yes, the motive; the cause.

BARTLEY. I'd sooner not say that.

MAGISTRATE. You'd better tell me truly. Was it money?

BARTLEY. Not at all! What did poor Jack Smith ever have in his pockets unless it might be his hands that would be in them?

MAGISTRATE. Any dispute about land?

BARTLEY (*indignantly*). Not at all! He never was a grabber or grabbed from anyone!

MAGISTRATE. You will find it better for you if you tell me at once.

BARTLEY. I tell you I would n't for the whole world wish to say what it was — it is a thing I would not like to be talking about.

MAGISTRATE. There is no use in hiding it. It will be discovered in the end.

BARTLEY. Well, I suppose it will, seeing that mostly everybody knows it before. Whisper here now. I will tell no lie; where would be the use? (*Puts his hand to his mouth and MAGISTRATE stoops.*) Don't be putting the blame on the parish, for such a thing was never done in the parish before — it was done for the sake of Kitty Keary, Jack Smith's wife.

MAGISTRATE (*to POLICEMAN*). Put on the handcuffs. We have been saved some trouble. I knew he would confess if taken in the right way.

(POLICEMAN *puts on handcuffs.*)

BARTLEY. Handcuffs now! Glory be! I always said, if there was ever any misfortune coming to this place it was on myself it would fall. I to be in handcuffs! There's no wonder at all in that.

(Enter MRS. FALLON, followed by the rest. She is looking back at them as she speaks.)

MRS. FALLON. Telling lies the whole of the people of this town are; telling lies, telling lies as fast as a dog will trot! Speaking against my poor respectable man! Saying he made an end of Jack Smith! My decent comrade! There is no better man and no kinder man in the whole of the five parishes! It's little annoyance he ever gave to anyone! (Turns and sees him.) What in the earthly world do I see before me? Bartley Fallon in charge of the police! Handcuffs on him! O Bartley, Bartley, what did you do at all at all?

BARTLEY. O Mary, there has a great misfortune come upon me! It is what I always said, that if there is ever any misfortune —

MRS. FALLON. What did he do at all, or is it bewitched I am?

MAGISTRATE. This man has been arrested on a charge of murder.

MRS. FALLON. Whose charge is that? Don't believe them! They are all liars in this place! Give me back my man!

MAGISTRATE. It is natural you should take his part, but you have no cause of complaint against your neighbors. He has been arrested for the murder of John Smith, on his own confession.

MRS. FALLON. The saints of heaven protect us! And what did he want killing Jack Smith?

MAGISTRATE. It is best you should know all. He did it on account of a love-affair with the murdered man's wife.

MRS. FALLON (*sitting down*). With Jack Smith's wife! With Kitty Keary! — Ochone, the traitor!

THE CROWD. A great shame, indeed. He is a traitor, indeed.

MRS. TULLY. To America he was bringing her, Mrs. Fallon.

BARTLEY. What are you saying, Mary? I tell you —

MRS. FALLON. Don't say a word! I won't listen to any word you'll say! (*Stops her ears.*) Oh, is n't he the treacherous villain? Ohone go deo!

BARTLEY. Be quiet till I speak! Listen to what I say!

MRS. FALLON. Sitting beside me on the ass car coming to the town, so quiet and so respectable, and treachery like that in his heart!

BARTLEY. Is it your wits you have lost, or is it I myself that have lost my wits?

MRS. FALLON. And it's hard I earned you, slaving, slaving — and you grumbling, and sighing, and coughing, and discontented, and the priest wore out anointing you, with all the times you threatened to die!

BARTLEY. Let you be quiet till I tell you!

MRS. FALLON. You to bring such a disgrace into the parish. A thing that was never heard of before!

BARTLEY. Will you shut your mouth and hear me speaking?

MRS. FALLON. And if it was for any sort of a fine handsome woman, but for a little fistful of a woman like Kitty Keary, that's not four feet high hardly, and not three teeth in her head unless she got new ones! May God reward you, Bartley Fallon, for the black treachery in your heart and the wickedness in your mind, and the red blood of poor Jack Smith that is wet upon your hand!

(*Voice of JACK SMITH heard singing*)

The sea shall be dry,

The earth under mourning and ban!

Then loud shall he cry

For the wife of the red-haired man!

BARTLEY. It's Jack Smith's voice — I never knew a ghost to sing before. It is after myself and the fork he is

coming! (*Goes back. Enter JACK SMITH.*) Let one of you give him the fork and I will be clear of him now and for eternity!

MRS. TARPEY. The Lord have mercy on us! Red Jack Smith! The man that was going to be waked!

JAMES RYAN. Is it back from the grave you are come?

SHAWN EARLY. Is it alive you are, or is it dead you are?

TIM CASEY. Is it yourself at all that's in it?

MRS. TULLY. Is it letting on you were to be dead?

MRS. FALLON. Dead or alive, let you stop Kitty Keary, your wife, from bringing my man away with her to America!

JACK SMITH. It is what I think, the wits are gone astray on the whole of you. What would my wife want bringing Bartley Fallon to America?

MRS. FALLON. To leave yourself, and to get quit of you she wants, Jack Smith, and to bring him away from myself. That's what the two of them had settled together.

JACK SMITH. I'll break the head of any man that says that! Who is it says it? (*To TIM CASEY*) Was it you said it? (*To SHAWN EARLY*) Was it you?

ALL TOGETHER (*backing and shaking their heads*). It was n't I said it!

JACK SMITH. Tell me the name of any man that said it!

ALL TOGETHER (*pointing to BARTLEY*). It was *him* that said it!

JACK SMITH. Let me at him till I break his head!

(*BARTLEY backs in terror. Neighbors hold JACK SMITH back.*)

JACK SMITH (*trying to free himself*). Let me at him! Is n't he the pleasant sort of a scarecrow for any woman to be crossing the ocean with! It's back from the docks of New York he'd be turned (*trying to rush at him again*), with a lie in his mouth and treachery in his heart, and another man's

wife by his side, and he passing her off as his own! Let me at him, can't you?

(*Makes another rush, but is held back.*)

MAGISTRATE (*pointing to JACK SMITH*). Policeman, put the handcuffs on this man. I see it all now. A case of false impersonation, a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice. There was a case in the Andaman Islands, a murderer of the Mopsa tribe, a religious enthusiast —

POLICEMAN. So he might be, too.

MAGISTRATE. We must take both these men to the scene of the murder. We must confront them with the body of the real Jack Smith.

JACK SMITH. I'll break the head of any man that will find my dead body!

MAGISTRATE. I'll call more help from the barracks.

(*Blows POLICEMAN's whistle.*)

BARTLEY. It is what I am thinking, if myself and Jack Smith are put together in the one cell for the night, the handcuffs will be taken off him, and his hands will be free, and murder will be done that time surely!

MAGISTRATE. Come on!

(*They turn to the right.*)

[CURTAIN]

THE BEGGAR AND THE KING¹

WINTHROP PARKHURST

CHARACTERS

THE KING OF A GREAT COUNTRY
HIS SERVANT
A BEGGAR

A chamber in the palace overlooks a courtyard. The season is midsummer. The windows of the palace are open, and from a distance there comes the sound of a man's voice crying for bread. THE KING sits in a golden chair. A golden crown is on his head, and he holds in his hand a sceptre which is also of gold. A SERVANT stands by his side, fanning him with an enormous fan of peacock feathers.

THE BEGGAR (*outside*). Bread. Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

THE KING (*languidly*). Who is that crying in the street for bread?

THE SERVANT (*fanning*). O king, it is a beggar.

THE KING. Why does he cry for bread?

THE SERVANT. O king, he cries for bread in order that he may fill his belly.

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THE KING. I do not like the sound of his voice. It annoys me very much. Send him away.

THE SERVANT (*bowing*). O king, he *has* been sent away.

THE KING. If that is so, then why do I hear his voice?

THE SERVANT. O king, he has been sent away many times, yet each time that he is sent away he returns again, crying louder than he did before.

THE KING. He is very unwise to annoy me on such a warm day. He must be punished for his impudence. Use the lash on him.

THE SERVANT. O king, it has been done.

THE KING. Then bring out the spears.

THE SERVANT. O king, the guards have already bloodied their swords many times driving him away from the palace gates. But it is of no avail.

THE KING. Then bind him and gag him if necessary. If need be cut out his tongue. I do not like the sound of the fellow's voice. It annoys me very much.

THE SERVANT. O king, thy orders were obeyed even yesterday.

THE KING (*frowning*). No. That cannot be. A beggar cannot cry for bread who has no tongue.

THE SERVANT. Behold he can — if he has grown another.

THE KING. What! Why, men are not given more than one tongue in a lifetime. To have more than one tongue is treason.

THE SERVANT. If it is treason to have more than one tongue, O king, then is this beggar surely guilty of treason.

THE KING (*pompously*). The punishment for treason is death. See to it that the fellow is slain. And do not fan me so languidly. I am very warm.

THE SERVANT (*fanning more rapidly*). Behold, O great and illustrious king, all thy commands were obeyed even yesterday.

THE KING. How! Do not jest with thy king.

THE SERVANT. If I jest, then there is truth in a jest. Even yesterday, O king, as I have told thee, the beggar which thou now hearest crying aloud in the street was slain by thy soldiers with a sword.

THE KING. Do ghosts eat bread? Forsooth, men who have been slain with a sword do not go about in the streets crying for a piece of bread.

THE SERVANT. Forsooth, they do if they are fashioned as this beggar.

THE KING. Why, he is but a man. Surely he cannot have more than one life in a lifetime.

THE SERVANT. Listen to a tale, O king, which happened yesterday.

THE KING. I am listening.

THE SERVANT. Thy soldiers smote this beggar for crying aloud in the streets for bread, but his wounds are already healed. They cut out his tongue, but he immediately grew another. They slew him, yet he is now alive.

THE KING. Ah! that is a tale which I cannot understand at all.

THE SERVANT. O king, it may be well.

THE KING. I cannot understand what thou sayest, either.

THE SERVANT. O king, that may be well also.

THE KING. Thou art speaking now in riddles. I do not like riddles. They confuse my brain.

THE SERVANT. Behold, O king, if I speak in riddles it is because a riddle has come to pass.

(THE BEGGAR'S voice suddenly cries out loudly.)

THE BEGGAR (*outside*). Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

THE KING. Ah! He is crying out again. His voice seems to me louder than it was before.

THE SERVANT. Hunger is as food to the lungs, O king.

THE KING. His lungs I will wager are well fed. Ha, ha!

THE SERVANT. But alas! his stomach is quite empty.

THE KING. That is not my business.

THE SERVANT. Should I not perhaps fling him a crust from the window?

THE KING. No! To feed a beggar is always foolish. Every crumb that is given to a beggar is an evil seed from which springs another fellow like him.

THE BEGGAR (*outside*). Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

THE SERVANT. He seems very hungry, O king.

THE KING. Yes. So I should judge.

THE SERVANT. If thou wilt not let me fling him a piece of bread thine ears must pay the debts of thy hand.

THE KING. A king can have no debts.

THE SERVANT. That is true, O king. Even so, the noise of this fellow's begging must annoy thee greatly.

THE KING. It does.

THE SERVANT. Doubtless he craves only a small crust from thy table and he would be content.

THE KING. Yea, doubtless he craves only to be a king and he would be very happy indeed.

THE SERVANT. Do not be hard, O king. Thou art ever wise and just. This fellow is exceedingly hungry. Dost thou not command me to fling him just one small crust from the window?

THE KING. My commands I have already given thee. See that the beggar is driven away.

THE SERVANT. But alas! O king, if he is driven away he will return again even as he did before.

THE KING. Then see to it that he is slain. I cannot be annoyed with the sound of his voice.

THE SERVANT. But alas! O great and illustrious king, if

he is slain he will come to life again even as he did before.

THE KING. Ah! that is true. But his voice troubles me. I do not like to hear it.

THE SERVANT. His lungs are fattened with hunger. Of a truth they are quite strong

THE KING. Well, propose a remedy to weaken them.

THE SERVANT. A remedy, O king?

(*He stops fanning.*)

THE KING. That is what I said. A remedy — and do not stop fanning me. I am exceedingly warm.

THE SERVANT (*fanning vigorously*). A crust of bread, O king, dropped from yonder window — forsooth that might prove a remedy.

THE KING (*angrily*). I have said I will not give him a crust of bread. If I gave him a crust to-day he would be just as hungry again to-morrow, and my troubles would be as great as before.

THE SERVANT. That is true, O king. Thy mind is surely filled with great learning.

THE KING. Therefore, some other remedy must be found.

THE SERVANT. O king, the words of thy illustrious mouth are as very meat-balls of wisdom.

THE KING (*musing*). Now let me consider. Thou sayest he does not suffer pain —

THE SERVANT. Therefore he cannot be tortured.

THE KING. And he will not die —

THE SERVANT. Therefore it is useless to kill him.

THE KING. Now let me consider. I must think of some other way.

THE SERVANT. Perhaps a small crust of bread, O king —

THE KING. Ha! I have it. I have it. I myself will order him to stop.

THE SERVANT (*horrified*). O king!

THE KING. Send the beggar here.

THE SERVANT. O king!

THE KING. Ha! I rather fancy the fellow will stop his noise when the king commands him to. Ha, ha, ha!

THE SERVANT. O king, thou wilt not have a beggar brought into thy royal chamber!

THE KING (*pleased with his idea*). Yea. Go outside and tell this fellow that the king desires his presence

THE SERVANT. O great and illustrious king, thou wilt surely not do this thing. Thou wilt surely not soil thy royal eyes by looking on such a filthy creature. Thou wilt surely not contaminate thy lips by speaking to a common beggar who cries aloud in the streets for bread.

THE KING. My ears have been soiled too much already. Therefore go now and do as I have commanded thee.

THE SERVANT. O great and illustrious king, thou wilt surely not —

THE KING (*roaring at him*). I said, Go! (THE SERVANT, *abashed, goes out.*) Forsooth, I fancy the fellow will stop his bawling when I order him to. Forsooth, I fancy he will be pretty well frightened when he hears that the king desires his presence. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

THE SERVANT (*returning*). O king, here is the beggar.

(*A shambling creature hung in filthy rags follows THE SERVANT slowly into the royal chamber.*)

THE KING. Ha! A magnificent sight, to be sure. Art thou the beggar who has been crying aloud in the streets for bread?

THE BEGGAR (*in a faint voice, after a slight pause*). Art thou the king?

THE KING. I am the king.

THE SERVANT (*aside to THE BEGGAR*). It is not proper for a beggar to ask a question of a king. Speak only as thou art spoken to.

THE KING (*to THE SERVANT*) Do thou likewise. (*To THE BEGGAR*) I have ordered thee here to speak to thee concerning a very grave matter. Thou art the beggar, I understand, who often cries aloud in the streets for bread. Now, the complaint of thy voice annoys me greatly. Therefore, do not beg any more.

THE BEGGAR (*faintly*). I — I do not understand.

THE KING. I said, do not beg any more.

THE BEGGAR. I — I do not understand.

THE SERVANT (*aside to THE BEGGAR*). The king has commanded thee not to beg for bread any more. The noise of thy voice is as garbage in his ears.

THE KING (*to THE SERVANT*). Ha! An excellent flower of speech. Pin it in thy buttonhole. (*To THE BEGGAR*) Thine ears, I see, are in need of a bath even more than thy body. I said, *Do not beg any more*.

THE BEGGAR. I — I do not understand.

THE KING (*making a trumpet of his hands and shouting*). *DO NOT BEG ANY MORE.*

THE BEGGAR. I — I do not understand.

THE KING. Heavens! He is deafer than a stone wall.

THE SERVANT. O king, he cannot be deaf, for he understood me quite easily when I spoke to him in the street.

THE KING (*to THE BEGGAR*). Art thou deaf? Canst thou hear what I am saying to thee now?

THE BEGGAR. Alas! I can hear every word perfectly.

THE KING. Fft! The impudence. Thy tongue shall be cut out for this.

THE SERVANT. O king, to cut out his tongue is useless, for he will grow another.

THE KING. No matter. It shall be cut out anyway. (*To THE BEGGAR*) I have ordered thee not to beg any more in the streets. What meanest thou by saying thou dost not understand?

THE BEGGAR. The words of thy mouth I can hear perfectly. But their noise is only a foolish tinkling in my ears.

THE KING. Fft! Only a — ! A lash will tinkle thy hide for thee if thou dost not cure thy tongue of impudence. I, thy king, have ordered thee not to beg any more in the streets for bread. Signify, therefore, that thou wilt obey the orders of thy king by quickly touching thy forehead thrice to the floor.

THE BEGGAR. That is impossible.

THE SERVANT (*aside to THE BEGGAR*). Come. It is not safe to tempt the patience of the king too long. His patience is truly great, but he loses it most wondrous quickly.

THE KING. Come, now: I have ordered thee to touch thy forehead to the floor.

THE SERVANT (*nudging him*). And quickly.

THE BEGGAR. Wherefore should I touch my forehead to the floor?

THE KING. In order to seal thy promise to thy king.

THE BEGGAR. But I have made no promise. Neither have I any king.

THE KING. Ho! He has made no promise. Neither has he any king. Ha, ha, ha. I have commanded thee not to beg any more, for the sound of thy voice is grievous unto my ears. Touch thy forehead now to the floor, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt go from this palace a free man. Refuse, and thou wilt be sorry before an hour that thy father ever came within twenty paces of thy mother.

THE BEGGAR. I have ever lamented that he did. For to be born into this world a beggar is a more unhappy thing than any that I know — unless it is to be born a king.

THE KING. Fft! Thy tongue of a truth is too lively for thy health. Come, now, touch thy forehead thrice to the floor and promise solemnly that thou wilt never beg in the streets again. And hurry!

THE SERVANT (*aside*). It is wise to do as thy king commands thee. His patience is near an end.

THE KING. Do not be afraid to soil the floor with thy forehead. I will graciously forgive thee for that.

(THE BEGGAR stands motionless.)

THE SERVANT. I said, it is not wise to keep the king waiting.

(THE BEGGAR *does not move*.)

THE KING. Well? (*A pause*.) Well? (*In a rage*) WELL?

THE BEGGAR. O king, thou hast commanded me not to beg in the streets for bread, for the noise of my voice offends thee. Now therefore do I likewise command thee to remove thy crown from thy forehead and throw it from yonder window into the street. For when thou hast thrown thy crown into the street, then will I no longer be obliged to beg.

THE KING. Fit! *Thou commandest me!* Thou, a beggar from the streets, commandest *me*, a king, to remove my crown from my forehead and throw it from yonder window into the street!

THE BEGGAR. That is what I said.

THE KING. Why, dost thou not know I can have thee slain for such words?

THE BEGGAR. No. Thou canst not have me slain. The spears of thy soldiers are as straws against my body.

THE KING. Ha! We shall see if they are. We shall see!

THE SERVANT. O king, it is indeed true. It is even as he has told thee.

THE BEGGAR. I have required thee to remove thy crown from thy forehead. If so be thou wilt throw it from yonder window into the street, my voice will cease to annoy thee any more. But if thou refuse, then thou wilt wish thou hadst never had any crown at all. For thy days will be filled with a terrible boding and thy nights will be full of horrors, even as a ship is full of rats.

THE KING. Why, this is insolence. This is treason!

THE BEGGAR. Wilt thou throw thy crown from yonder window?

THE KING. Why, this is high treason!

THE BEGGAR. I ask thee, wilt thou throw thy crown from yonder window?

THE SERVANT (*aside to THE KING*). Perhaps it were wise to humor him, O king. After thou hast thrown thy crown away I can go outside and bring it to thee again.

THE BEGGAR. Well? Well? (*He points to the window.*) Well?

THE KING. No! I will not throw my crown from that window — no, nor from any other window. What! Shall I obey the orders of a beggar? Never!

THE BEGGAR (*preparing to leave*). Truly, that is spoken like a king. Thou art a king, so thou wouldest prefer to lose thy head than that silly circle of gold that so foolishly sits upon it. But it is well. Thou art a king. Thou couldst not prefer otherwise. (*He walks calmly toward the door.*)

THE KING (*to THE SERVANT*). Stop him! Seize him! Does he think to get off so easily with his impudence!

THE BEGGAR (*coolly*). One of thy servants cannot stop me. Neither can ten thousand of them do me any harm. I am stronger than a mountain. I am stronger than the sea!

THE KING. Ha! We will see about that, we will see about that. (*To THE SERVANT*) Hold him, I say. Call the guards. He shall be put in chains.

THE BEGGAR. My strength is greater than a mountain and my words are more fearful than a hurricane. This servant of thine cannot even touch me. With one breath of my mouth I can blow over this whole palace.

THE KING. Dost thou hear the impudence he is offering me? Why dost thou not seize him? What is the matter with thee? Why dost thou not call the guards?

THE BEGGAR. I will not harm thee now. I will only cry aloud in the streets for bread wherewith to fill my belly. But one day I will not be so kind to thee. On that day my mouth will be filled with a rushing wind and my arms will become as strong as steel rods, and I will blow over this palace, and all the bones in thy foolish body I will snap between my fingers. I will beat upon a large drum and thy head will be my drumstick. I will not do these things now. But one day I will do them. Therefore, when my voice sounds again in thine ears, begging for bread, remember what I have told thee. Remember, O king, and be afraid!

(*He walks out. THE SERVANT, struck dumb, stares after him. THE KING sits in his chair, dazed.*)

THE KING (*suddenly collecting his wits*). After him! After him! He must not be allowed to escape! After him!

THE SERVANT (*faltering*). O king — I cannot seem to move.

THE KING. Quick, then. Call the guards. He must be caught and put in chains. Quick, I say. Call the guards!

THE SERVANT. O king — I cannot seem to call them.

THE KING. How! Art thou dumb? Ah!

(*THE BEGGAR's voice is heard outside.*)

THE BEGGAR. Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

THE KING. Ah. (*He turns toward the window, half-frightened, and then, almost instinctively, raises his hands toward his crown, and seems on the point of tossing it out the window. But with an oath he replaces it and presses it firmly on his head.*) How! Am I afraid of a beggar!

THE BEGGAR (*continuing outside*). Bread. Bread. Give me some bread.

THE KING (*with terrible anger*). Close that window!

(*THE SERVANT stands stupent, and the voice of THE BEGGAR grows louder as the curtain falls.*)

TIDES¹

GEORGE MIDDLETON

CHARACTERS

WILLIAM WHITE, a famous Internationalist
HILDA, his wife
WALLACE, their son

SCENE: At the Whites'; spring, 1917. A simply furnished study. The walls are lined with bookshelves, indicating, by their improvised quality, that they have been increased as occasion demanded. On these are stacked, in addition to the books themselves, many files of papers, magazines, and "reports." The large work-table, upon which rests a double student lamp and a telephone, is conspicuous. A leather couch with pillows is opposite, pointing toward a doorway which leads into the living-room. There is also a doorway in back, which apparently opens on the hallway beyond. The room is comfortable in spite of its general disorder: it is essentially the workshop of a busy man of public affairs. The strong sunlight of a spring day comes in through the window, flooding the table.

WILLIAM WHITE is standing by the window, smoking a pipe. He is about fifty, of striking appearance: the visual incarnation of the popular conception of a leader

¹ Reprinted by permission of the author and of Messrs Henry Holt and Company, the publishers, from the volume, *Masks and Other One-Act Plays* (1920).

of men. There is authority and strength in the lines of his face; his whole personality is commanding; his voice has all the modulations of a well-trained orator; his gestures are sweeping — for, even in private conversation, he is habitually conscious of an audience. Otherwise, he is simple and engaging, with some indication of his humble origin.

On the sofa opposite, with a letter in her hand, HILDA WHITE, his wife, is seated. She is somewhat younger in fact, though in appearance she is as one who has been worn a bit by the struggle of many years. Her manner contrasts with her husband's: her inheritance of delicate refinement is ever present in her soft voice and gentle gesture. Yet she, too, suggests strength — the sort which will endure all for a fixed intention.

It is obvious throughout that she and her husband have been happy comrades in their life together, and that a deep fundamental bond has united them in spite of the different social spheres from which each has sprung.

WHITE (*seeing she has paused*). Go on, dear; go on. Let's hear all of it.

HILDA. Oh, what's the use, Will? You know how differently he feels about the war.

WHITE (*with quiet sarcasm*). But it's been so many years since your respectable brother has honored me even with the slightest allusion —

HILDA. If you care for what he says — (*continuing to read the letter*) — "Remember, Hilda, you are an American. I don't suppose your husband considers that an honor; but I do."

WHITE (*interrupting*). And what kind of an American has he been in times of peace? He's wrung forty per cent profit out of his factory and fought every effort of the workers to organize. Ah, these smug hypocrites!

HILDA (*reading*). "His violent opposition to America going in has been disgrace enough —"

WHITE. But his war profits were all right. Oh, yes.

HILDA. Let me finish, dear, since you want it. (*Reading*) " — been disgrace enough. But now that we're in, I'm writing in the faint hope, if you are not too much under his influence, that you will persuade him to keep his mouth shut. This country will tolerate no difference of opinion now. You radicals had better get on board the band wagon. It's prison or acceptance." (*She stops reading.*) He's right, dear. There will be nothing more intolerant than a so-called democracy at war.

WHITE. By God! It's superb! Silence for twenty years and now he writes his poor misguided sister for fear she will be further disgraced by her radical husband.

HILDA. We must n't descend to his bitterness.

WHITE. No: I suppose I should resuscitate the forgotten doctrine of forgiving my enemies.

HILDA. He's not your enemy; he merely looks at it all differently.

WHITE. I was thinking of his calm contempt for me these twenty years — ever since you married me — "out of your class," as he called it.

HILDA. Oh, hush, Will. I've been so happy with you I can bear him no ill will. Besides, does n't his attitude seem natural? You must n't forget that no man in this country has fought his class more than you. That hurts — especially coming from an *acquired* relative.

WHITE. Yes; that aggravates the offense. And I'll tell you something you may not know. (*Bitterly*) Whenever I've spoken against privilege and wealth it's been his pudgy, comfortable face I've shaken my fist at. He's been so damned comfortable all his life.

HILDA. (*She looks at him in surprise.*) Why, Will, you

surely don't envy him his comfort, do you? I can't make you out. What's come over you these last weeks? You've always been above such personal bitterness; even when you were most condemned and ridiculed. If it were anybody but you I'd think you had done something you were ashamed of.

WHITE. What do you mean?

HILDA. Have n't you sometimes noticed that is what bitterness to another means: a failure within oneself? (*He goes over to chair and sits without answering.*) I can think of you beaten by outside things — that sort of failure we all meet; but somehow I can never think of you failing yourself. You've been so brave and self-reliant: you've fought so hard for the truth.

WHITE (*tapping letter*). But he thinks *he* knows the truth, too.

HILDA. He's also an intense nature.

WHITE (*thoughtfully after a pause*). Yet there is *some* truth in what he says.

HILDA (*smiling*). But you didn't like it — coming from him?

WHITE. It will be different with you and me now that America's gone in.

HILDA. Yes. It will be harder for us here; for hate is always farthest from the trenches. But you and I are not the sort who would compromise to escape the persecution which is the resource of the non-combatant.

(*The phone rings: he looks at his watch.*)

WHITE. That's for me.

HILDA. Let me. (*She goes.*) It may be Wallace. (*At phone*) Yes: this is 116 Chelsea. Long Distance? (*He starts as she says to him*) It must be our boy. (*At phone*) Who? Oh — Mr. William White? Yes: he'll be here. (*She hangs up receiver.*) She'll ring when she gets the connection through.

WHITE (*turning away*). It takes so long these days.

HILDA. Funny he did n't ask for me.

WHITE What made you think it was Wallace?

HILDA. I took it for granted. He must be having a hard time at college with all the boys full of war fever.

WHITE. And a father with my record.

HILDA. He should be proud of the example. He has more than other boys to cling to these days when everybody is losing his head as the band plays and the flag is waved. He won't be carried away by it. He'll remember all we taught him. Ah, Will, when I think we now have conscription — as they have in Germany — I thank God every night our boy is too young for the draft.

WHITE. But when his time comes what will he do?

HILDA (*calmly*) He will do it with courage

WHITE (*referring to her brother's letter*). Either prison or acceptance!

HILDA. I would rather have my son in prison than have him do what he felt was wrong. Would n't you?

WHITE (*evasively*). We won't have to face that problem for two years.

HILDA. And when it comes — if he falters — I'll give him these notes of that wonderful speech you made at the International Conference in 1910. (*Picking it up*) I was looking through it only this morning.

WHITE (*troubled*). Oh, that speech.

HILDA (*glancing through it with enthusiasm*). "All wars are imperialistic in origin. Do away with overseas investments, trade routes, private control of ammunition factories, secret diplomacy —"

WHITE. Don't you see that's all dead wood?

HILDA (*not heeding him*). This part gave me new strength when I thought of Wallace. (*Reading with eloquence*) "War will stop when young men put Internationalism above

Nationality, the law of God above the dictates of statesmen, the law of love above the law of hate, the law of self-sacrifice above the law of profit. There must be no boundaries in man's thought. Let the young men of the world once throw down their arms, let them once refuse to point their guns at human hearts, and all the boundaries of the world will melt away and peace will find a resting-place in the hearts of men!"

WHITE (*taking it from her*). And I made you believe it! What silly prophets we radicals were. (*He tears it up*.) Mere scraps of paper, dear; scraps of paper, now.

HILDA. But it was the truth; it still *is* the truth.

WHITE. Hilda, there's something I want to talk over very, very seriously with you. I've been putting it off.

HILDA. Yes, dear? (*The outer door is heard to bang*.) Listen: was n't that the front door?

WHITE. Perhaps it's the maid?

HILDA (*a bit nervously*). No: she's upstairs. No one rang. Please see.

WHITE (*smiling*). Now don't worry! It can't possibly be the Secret Service.

HILDA. One never knows in war times what to expect. I sometimes feel I am in a foreign country.

(WHITE goes slowly to the door in back and opens it.

WALLACE, *their son, with valise in hand, is standing there, as if he had hesitated to enter.*

He is a fine clean-cut young fellow, with his father's physical endowment and his mother's spiritual intensity. The essential note he strikes is that of honesty. It is apparent he is under the pressure of a momentous decision which has brought him unexpectedly home from college.

WHITE. Wallace!

WALLACE (*shaking hands*). Hello, Dad!

HILDA. Wallace! My boy!

(WALLACE drops valise and goes to his mother's arms.)

WALLACE (with deep feeling). Mother!

WHITE (after a pause). Well, boy; this is unexpected. We were just talking of you.

WALLACE. Were you?

HILDA. I'm so glad to see you, so glad.

WALLACE. Yes — yes — but —

WHITE. There's nothing the matter?

HILDA. You've had trouble at college?

WALLACE. Not exactly. But I couldn't stand it there. I've left — for good.

WHITE. I was sure that would happen.

HILDA. Tell us. You know we'll understand.

WALLACE. Dad, if you don't mind, I'd like to talk it over with mother first.

WHITE. Of course, old fellow, that's right. She'll stand by you just as she's always stood by me — all these years. (He kisses her) I — I —

(He smooths her hair gently, looking into her eyes as she smiles up at him.)

We must n't let this war hurt all we've had together — you and I —

HILDA (smiling and turning towards her son). And Wallace.

WHITE. And Wallace. Yes. (WALLACE looks away guiltily.) Let me know when the phone comes.

(He goes out hastily. She closes the door after him and then comes to WALLACE, who has sat down, indicating he is troubled.)

HILDA. They made it hard for you at college?

WALLACE. I don't know how to tell you.

HILDA. I understand. The flag waving, the patriotic speeches, the billboards advertising the glory of war, the

call of adventure offered to youth, the pressure of your friends — all made it hard for you to be called a slacker.

WALLACE. No, mother. I was n't afraid of what they could call me. That was easy.

HILDA (*proudly*). You are your father's son!

WALLACE. Mother, I can't stand the thought of killing, you know that. And I could n't forget all you've told me. That's why I've had to think this out all these months alone; why I've hesitated longer than most fellows. The only thing I was really afraid of was being wrong. But now I know I'm right and I'm going clean through to the limit.

HILDA. As your father said, I'll stand by you — whatever it is — if only you feel it's right.

WALLACE. Will you? Will you, mother? No matter what happens? (*She nods*) I knew you would. (*Taking her hand*) Then, mother, listen. I've volunteered.

HILDA (*shocked*). Volunteered!

WALLACE. Yes. I leave for training-camp to-night.

HILDA. To-night?

WALLACE. Yes, mother. Once I made up my mind, I could n't wait to be drafted. I wanted to offer myself. I did n't want to be made to go.

HILDA (*hardly grasping it*). But you are too young.

WALLACE. I lied about my age. You and father can stop me if you tell the truth. That's why I've come back. I want you to promise you won't tell.

HILDA. You ask me to aid you in what I don't believe?

WALLACE. But you said you'd stick by me if I thought it was right.

HILDA. But —

WALLACE (*with fervor*). And I tell you, mother, I do feel it was right for America to go in. I see now we ought to have declared war when they crushed Belgium. Yes; we ought to have gone in when the Lusitania was sunk. But

we've been patient. The President tried to keep us out of it until we *had* to go in to save our self-respect. We had to go in to show we were men of honor, not pussy-cats. We had to go in to show the world the Stars and Stripes was n't a dish-rag on which the Germans could dry their bloody hands!

HILDA (*gazing at him incredulously*). You hate them as much as that?

WALLACE. Hate? No, mother, no (*As if questioning himself*) I really have n't any hate for the German *people*. People are just people everywhere, I suppose, and they're tricked and fooled by their rotten government, as the President says.

HILDA. Then why fight them?

WALLACE. Because they're standing back of their government, doing what it says. And they've got to be licked to show them what kind of a government they have.

HILDA. At least you have no hate in your heart — that's something.

WALLACE. Oh, yes, I have, mother. But it is n't for the poor devils I've got to shoot. It's for the stay-at-home fellow here in America who sits in a comfortable armchair, who applauds patriotic sentiment, cheers the flag, and does nothing for his country but hate and hate — while we fight for him. That's the fellow I'll hate all right when I sit in the trenches. And that's why I couldn't look myself in the face if I stayed out a day longer; why I've got to go in; why I'm going to die if I must, because *everybody* ought to be willing to die for what he believes.

HILDA. You are my son, *too!* For I would willingly have died if it could have kept us out of this war.

WALLACE. Yes. I am your son, too. And that's why you would n't respect me if I did n't go through.

HILDA. No. I would n't have respected you. But —

but — (*She breaks a bit, then controls herself.*) You are quite sure you're doing what's right?

WALLACE (*tenderly*). Would I have been willing to hurt you like this?

HILDA (*holding him close to her*). My boy; my boy!

WALLACE. It'll be all right, mother.

HILDA. Ah, yes. It will be all right. Nothing matters in time: it's only the moments that hurt.

WALLACE (*after a pause*). Then you won't tell my real age, or interfere?

HILDA. I respect your right to decide your own life.

WALLACE (*joyed*). Mother!

HILDA. I respect your dedication; your willingness to sacrifice for your beliefs. Why, Wallace, it would be a crime for me to stand in your way — even with my mother's love. (*He kisses her.*) Do it all as cleanly as you can. I'll hope and pray that you'll come back to me. (*Half breaking down and taking him in her arms.*) Oh, my boy; my boy. Let me hold you. You'll never know how hard it is for a mother.

WALLACE (*gently*). But other mothers send their boys.

HILDA. Most of them believe in what their sons are fighting for. Mothers have *got* to believe in it; or else how could they stand the thought of bayonets stuck into the bodies they brought forth in their own blood? (*There is a pause till she controls herself.*) I'll help you get your things together.

WALLACE. And father?

HILDA. He will be angry.

WALLACE. But you will make him understand?

HILDA. I'll try. Yet you must be patient with him if he does n't understand. Don't ever forget his long fight against all kinds of Prussianism when you hear him reviled by those who have always hated his radicalism and who, now, under the guise of patriotism, are trying to render him useless for

further attacks on them after the war. He's been persecuted so by them — even back in the days when our press was praising Germany and our distinguished citizens were dining at the Emperor's table. Don't forget all this, my boy. These days are hard for him — and me — harder perhaps than for you who go out to die in glory and praise. There are no flags for us, no music that stirs, no applause; but we too suffer in silence for what we believe. And it is only the strongest who can survive. — Now call your father.

WALLACE (*goes to door*). Dad! (*He leaves door open and turns to his mother*) I'll be getting my things together. (*There is a pause. WHITE enters.*) Dad, mother has something to ask you. (*He looks from father to mother.*) Thanks, little mother.

(*He kisses her and goes out, taking the valise. His father and mother stand facing each other.*)

HILDA. Wallace has volunteered. (*He looks at her keenly.*) He has lied about his age. He wants us to let him go.

WHITE. Volunteered?

HILDA. Yes; he leaves to-night.

WHITE (*after a pause*). And what have you told him?

HILDA. That he must go.

WHITE. You can say that?

HILDA. It is the way he sees it.

WHITE (*going to her sympathetically*). Hilda.

HILDA (*looking up at him tenderly*). O Will, do you remember when he was born? (*He soothes her.*) And all we nursed him through afterwards; and all we taught him; all we tried to show him about war. (*With a shrug of her shoulders*) None of it has mattered.

WHITE. War is stronger than all that.

HILDA. So we must n't blame him. You won't blame him?

WHITE. He fears I will?

HILDA. He has always feared you a little, though he loves you deeply. You must n't oppose him, dear. You won't?

WHITE (*wearily*). Is there any use opposing anybody or anything these days?

HILDA. We must wait till the storm passes.

WHITE. That's never been my way.

HILDA. No. You've fought all your life. But now we must sit silent together and wait; wait for our boy to come back. Will, think of it; we are going to have a boy "over there," too.

WHITE. Hilda, has n't it ever struck you that we may have been all wrong? (*She looks at him, as she holds his hand.*) What could these frail hands do? How could we poor little King Canutes halt this tide that has swept over the world? Is n't it better, after all, that men should fight themselves out; bring such desolation upon themselves that they will be forced to see the futility of war? May it not become so terrible that men — the workers, I mean — will throw down their worn-out weapons of their own accord? Won't permanent peace come through bitter experience rather than talk — talk — talk?

HILDA (*touching the torn pages of his speech and smiling*). Here is your answer to your own question.

WHITE. Oh, that was all theory. We're in now. You say yourself we can't oppose it. Is n't it better if we try to direct the current to our own ends rather than sink by trying to swim against it?

HILDA. Oh, yes; it would be easier for one who *could* compromise.

WHITE. But have n't we radicals been too intolerant of compromise?

HILDA. That has been *your* strength. And it is your

strength I'm relying on now that Wallace — Shall I call him?

WHITE (*significantly*). No, wait.

HILDA (*apprehensive at his turn*). Oh, yes. Before he came you said there was something — (*The phone rings. They both look at it*) That's for you.

WHITE (*not moving*). Yes.

HILDA (*hardly believing his attitude*) Is — is it private?

WHITE. No. Perhaps it will be easier this way. (*He hesitates, then goes to phone as she stands expectant.*) Yes. Yes. Long Distance? Washington? (*Her lips repeat the word.*) Yes. This is William White. Hello. Yes. Is this the Secretary speaking? Oh, I appreciate the honor of having you confirm it personally. Senator Bough is chairman? At *his* request? Ah, yes, war makes strange bedfellows. Yes The passport and credentials? Oh, I'll be ready. Yes. Good-bye.

(*He hangs up the receiver and looks at her.*)

HILDA. You, too!

WHITE. I've been trying to tell you these last weeks; but I could n't somehow.

HILDA. You were ashamed?

WHITE. No, dear; only I knew it would hurt you.

HILDA. I'm not thinking of myself but of you. You are going to be part of this war?

WHITE. I'm going to do what I can to help finish it.

HILDA. By compromising with the beliefs of a lifetime?

WHITE. No, dear; not that. I've accepted the appointment on this commission because I'm going to accept facts.

HILDA. Have the facts of war changed, or is it you?

WHITE. Neither has changed; but I'm going to act differently. I'm going to be part of it. Yes. I'm going to help direct the current.

HILDA. I can't believe what I am hearing. Is it you

William White, speaking? You who, for twenty years, have stood against *all* war!

WHITE. Yes.

HILDA. And now, when the test comes, you are going to lend yourself to it! You of all men!

WHITE. Hilda, dear; I did n't expect you to accept it easily; but I think I can make you see if you will let me.

HILDA (*poignantly*). If I will *let* you! Why, Will, I must understand; I must.

WHITE. Perhaps it will be difficult at first — with your standards.

HILDA. But my standards were yours, Will. You gave them to me. You taught me. You took a young girl who loved you. You showed her the truth, and she followed you and has followed you gladly through hard years of struggle and poverty because of those ideals. And now you talk of *my* standards! Will, don't you see, I *must* understand?

WHITE. Dear, standards are relative things; they differ with circumstance.

HILDA. Have your ideals only been old clothes you change to suit the weather?

WHITE. It's the end we must keep in mind. *I* have n't changed or compromised one bit in that. I'm working in changed conditions, that's all; working with all my heart to do away with all war.

HILDA. By fighting one?

WHITE (*with eloquence*). Yes. Because it is necessary. I've come to see we can't argue war out of the world with words. We've got to beat it out of the world. It can't be done with our hands lifted up in prayer; it can only be done with iron hands crushing it down. War is the mood of the world. Well, I'm going to fight in my fashion. And when it is over, I'm going to keep on fighting; for the next war

will be greater than this. It will be economic revolution. It will be the war of capital and labor. And I mean to be ready.

HILDA (*listening incredulously*). And to get ready you are willing to link arms now with Senator Bough — a man you once called the lackey of Wall Street — a man who has always opposed every democratic principle.

WHITE. Yes. Don't you see the Government is beginning to realize it can't do without us? Don't you see my appointment is an acknowledgment of the rising tide of radicalism in the world? Don't you see, with the prestige that will come to me from this appointment, I will have greater power after the war, power to bring about the realization of all our dreams, power to demand — even at the Peace table itself, perhaps — that all wars must end?

HILDA. Do you actually believe you will have any power with your *own* people when you have compromised them for a temporary expediency?

WHITE (*with a gesture*). The leader must be wiser than the people who follow.

HILDA. So, contempt for your people is the first thing your new power has brought you! (*He makes a gesture of denial*) You feel you are above them — not of them. Do you believe for a moment that Senator Bough has anything but contempt for you, too?

WHITE (*confidently*). He needs me.

HILDA. Needs you? Don't you understand why he had you appointed on that committee? He wanted to get you out of the way.

WHITE. Is n't that an acknowledgment of my power?

HILDA. Yes. You're a great asset *now*. You're a "re-formed" radical. Why, Will, he'll use you in the capitals of Europe to advertise his liberalism; just as the prohibitionist exhibits a reformed drunkard.

WHITE. And I tell you, Hilda, after the war I shall be stronger than he is, stronger than any of them.

HILDA. No man is strong unless he does what he feels is right. No, no, Will; you've convicted yourself with your own eloquence. You've wanted to do this for some reason. But it is n't the one you've told me. No; no.

WHITE (*angrily*). You doubt my sincerity?

HILDA. No; only the way you have read yourself.

WHITE. Well, if you think I've tried to make it easy for myself you are mistaken. Is it easy to pull out of the rut and habit of years? Easy to know my friends will jeer and say I've sold out? Easy to have *you* misunderstand? (*Goes to her.*) Hilda, I'm doing this for their good. I'm doing it — just as Wallace is — because I feel it's right.

HILDA. No; you should n't say that. You are not doing this for the same reason Wallace is. He believes in this war. He has accepted it all simply without a question. If you had seen the look in his eyes, you would have known he was a dedicated spirit; there was no shadow, no doubt; it was pure flame. But you! You believe differently! You can't hush the mind that for twenty years has thought no war ever could henceforth be justified. You can't give yourself to this war without tricking yourself with phrases. You see power in it and profit for yourself. (*He protests.*) That's your own confession. You are only doing what is expedient — not what is right. Oh, Will, don't compare your motives with those of our son. I sent him forth, without a word of protest, because he wishes to die for his own ideals· you are killing your own ideals for the ideals of others! (*She turns away.*) Oh, Will, that's what hurts. If you were only like him, I — I could stand it.

WHITE (*quietly, after a pause*) I can't be angry at you — even when you say such things. You've been too much a part of my life, and work, and I love you, Hilda. You know

that, don't you, dear? (*He sits beside her and takes her hand.*) I knew it would be difficult to make you understand. Only once have I lacked courage, and that was when I felt myself being drawn into this and they offered me the appointment. For then I saw I must tell you. You know I never have wanted to cause you pain. But when you asked me to let Wallace go, I thought you would understand my going, too. — Oh, perhaps our motives are different; he is young; war has caught his imagination; but, I, too, see a duty, a way to accomplish my ideals.

HILDA. Let's leave ideals out of this now. It's like bitter enemies praying to the same God as they kill each other.

WHITE. Yes. War is full of ironies. I see that: Wallace can't. It's so full of mixed motives, good and bad. Yes. I'll grant all that. Only, America has gone in. The whole tide was against us, dear. It is sweeping over the world: a brown tide of khaki sweeping everything before it. All my life I've fought against the current. (*Wearily*) And now that I've gone in, too, my arms seem less tired. Yes; and except for the pain I've caused you, I've never in all my life felt so — so happy.

(*Then she understands. She slowly turns to him, with tenderness in her eyes.*)

HILDA. Oh, now, Will, I do understand. Now I see the real reason for what you've done.

WHITE (*defensively*). I've given the real reason.

HILDA (*her heart going out to him*). You poor tired man. My dear one. Forgive me if I made it difficult for you, if I said cruel words. I ought to have guessed; ought to have seen what life has done to you. (*He looks up, not understanding her words*). Those hands of yours first dug a living out of the ground. Then they built houses and grew strong because you were a workman — a man of the people. You

saw injustice, and all your life you fought against those who had the power to inflict it: the press; the comfortable respectables, like my brother; and even those of your own group who opposed you — you fought them all. And they look at you as an outsider, an alien in your own country. O Will, I know how hard it has been for you to be always on the defensive, against the majority. It is hard to live alone, away from the herd. It does tire one to the bone and make one envious of the comfort and security they find by being together.

WHITE. Yes — but —

HILDA. Now the war comes and with it a chance to get back; to be part of the majority; to be welcomed with open arms by those who have fought you; to go back with honor and praise. And, yes, to have the warmth and comfort of the crowd. That's the real reason you're going in. You're tired and worn out with the fight. I know. I understand now.

WHITE (*earnestly*). If I thought it was that, I'd kill myself.

HILDA. There's been enough killing already. I have to understand it somehow to accept it at all.

(*He stares at her, wondering at her words. She smiles.*

He goes to a chair and sits down, gazing before him.

The music of Over There is now heard outside in the street, approaching nearer and nearer. It is a military band. WALLACE excitedly rushes in dressed in khaki.)

WALLACE. Mother, mother. The boys are coming down the street. (*Sees father.*) Dad! Mother has told you?

HILDA (*calmly*). Yes; I've told him.

WALLACE. And you're going to let me go, Dad?

HILDA. Yes.

WALLACE. Oh, thanks, Dad (*grasping his hand*).

I knew mother would make you see. (*Music nearer.*) Listen! Is n't that a great tune? Lifts you up on your feet and carries you over there. Gee, it just gets into a fellow and makes him want to run for his gun and charge over the top (*He goes to balcony.*) Look! They're nearing here; all ready to sail with the morning tide. They've got their helmets on. You can't see the end of them coming down the avenue. Oh, thank God, I'm going to be one of them soon. Thank God! I'm going to fight for Uncle Sam and the Stars and Stripes (*Calls off*) Hurrah! (*To them*) Oh, I wish I had a flag. Why have n't we got a flag here? — Hurrah!!

(*As he goes out on the balcony the music plays louder.*

HILDA has gone to WHITE during this, and stands behind him, with her arms down his arms, as he sits there, gazing before him.)

HILDA (*fervently*). Oh, Will, if I could only feel it as he does!!

(*The music begins to trail off as WHITE tenderly takes hold of her hands.*)

[CURTAIN]

ILE

EUGENE O'NEILL

SCENE: CAPTAIN KEENEY's cabin on board the steam whaling ship Atlantic Queen — a small, square compartment, about eight feet high, with a skylight in the centre looking out on the poop deck. On the left (the stern of the ship) a long bench with rough cushions is built in against the wall. In front of the bench, a table. Over the bench, several curtained portholes.

In the rear, left, a door leading to the captain's sleeping-quarters. To the right of the door a small organ, looking as if it were brand-new, is placed against the wall.

On the right, to the rear, a marble-topped sideboard. On the sideboard, a woman's sewing-basket. Farther forward, a doorway leading to the companion way, and past the officers' quarters to the main deck.

In the centre of the room, a stove. From the middle of the ceiling a hanging lamp is suspended. The walls of the cabin are painted white.

There is no rolling of the ship, and the light which comes through the skylight is sickly and faint, indicating one of those gray days of calm when ocean and sky are alike dead. The silence is unbroken except for the measured tread of someone walking up and down on the poop deck overhead.

It is nearing two bells — one o'clock — in the afternoon of a day in the year 1895.

At the rise of the curtain there is a moment of intense silence. Then the STEWARD enters and commences to clear the table of the few dishes which still remain on it after the CAPTAIN's dinner. He is an old, grizzled man dressed in dungaree pants, a sweater, and a woolen cap with ear-flaps. His manner is sullen and angry. He stops stacking up the plates and casts a quick glance upward at the skylight; then tiptoes over to the closed door in rear and listens with his ear pressed to the crack. What he hears makes his face darken and he mutters a furious curse. There is a noise from the doorway on the right, and he darts back to the table.

BEN enters. *He is an over-grown, gawky boy with a long, pinched face. He is dressed in sweater, fur cap, etc. His teeth are chattering with the cold and he hurries to the stove, where he stands for a moment shivering, blowing on his hands, slapping them against his sides, on the verge of crying.*

THE STEWARD (*in relieved tones — seeing who it is*). Oh, 't is you, is it? What're ye shiverin' 'bout? Stay by the stove where ye belong and ye'll find no need of chatterin'

BEN It's c-c-old (*Trying to control his chattering teeth — derisively*) Who d' ye think it were — the Old Man?

THE STEWARD (*He makes a threatening move — BEN shrinks away.*) None o' your lip, young un, or I'll learn ye. (*More kindly*) Where was it ye've been all o' the time — the fo'c'sle?

BEN. Yes.

THE STEWARD. Let the Old Man see ye up for'ard monkey-shinin' with the hands and ye'll get a hidin' ye'll not forget in a hurry.

BEN. Aw, he don't see nothin'. (*A trace of awe in his*

tones — he glances upward.) He just walks up and down like he did n't notice nobody — and stares at the ice to the no' th'ard.

THE STEWARD (*the same tone of awe creeping into his voice*). He's always starin' at the ice. (*In a sudden rage, shaking his fist at the skylight*) Ice, ice, ice! Damn him and damn the ice! Holdin' us in for nigh on a year — nothin' to see but ice — stuck in it like a fly in molasses!

BEN (*apprehensively*). Ssshh! He'll hear ye.

THE STEWARD (*raging*). Aye, damn him, and damn the Arctic seas, and damn this stinkin' whalin' ship of his, and damn me for a fool to ever ship on it! (*Subsiding, as if realizing the uselessness of this outburst — shaking his head — slowly, with deep conviction*) He's a hard man — as hard a man as ever sailed the seas.

BEN (*solemnly*). Aye.

THE STEWARD. The two years we all signed up for are done this day. Blessed Christ! Two years o' this dog's life, and no luck in the fishin', and the hands half starved with the food runnin' low, rotten as it is; and not a sign of him turnin' back for home! (*Bitterly*) Home! I begin to doubt if ever I'll set foot on land again. (*Excitedly*) What is it he thinks he's goin' to do? Keep us all up here after our time is worked out till the last man of us is starved to death or frozen? We've grub enough hardly to last out the voyage back if we started now. What are the men goin' to do 'bout it? Did ye hear any talk in the fo'c's'le?

BEN (*going over to him — in a half-whisper*). They said if he don't put back south for home to-day they're goin' to mutiny.

THE STEWARD (*with grim satisfaction*). Mutiny? Aye, 'tis the only thing they can do; and serve him right after the manner he's treated them — 's if they were n't no better nor dogs.

BEN. The ice is all broke up to s'uth'rd. They's clear water's far's you can see. He ain't got no excuse for not turnin' back for home, the men says.

THE STEWARD (*bitterly*). He won't look nowheres but no'th'rd where they's only the ice to see. He don't want to see no clear water. All he thinks on is gittin' the ile — 's if it was our fault he ain't had good luck with the whales. (*Shaking his head*) I think the man 's mighty nigh losin' his senses.

BEN (*awed*). D' you really think he's crazy?

THE STEWARD. Aye, it's the punishment o' God on him. Did ye hear ever of a man who was n't crazy do the things he does? (*Pointing to the door in rear*) Who but a man that 's mad would take his woman — and as sweet a woman as ever was — on a stinkin' whalin' ship to the Arctic seas to be locked in by the rotten ice for nigh on a year, and maybe lose her senses forever — for it's sure she'll never be the same again.

BEN (*sadly*). She useter be awful nice to me before — (*his eyes grow wide and frightened*) she got — like she is.

THE STEWARD. Aye, she was good to all of us. 'T would have been hell on board without her, for he's a hard man — a hard, hard man — a driver if there ever was one. (*With a grim laugh*) I hope he's satisfied now—drivin' her on till she's near lost her mind. And who could blame her? 'T is a God's wonder we're not a ship full of crazed people — with the damned ice all the time, and the quiet so thick you're afraid to hear your own voice.

BEN (*with a frightened glance toward the door on right*). She don't never speak to me no more — jest looks at me 's if she did n't know me.

THE STEWARD. She don't know no one — but him. She talks to him — when she does talk — right enough.

BEN. She does nothin' all day long now but sit and

sew — and then she cries to herself without makin' no noise. I've seen her.

THE STEWARD. Aye, I could hear her through the door a while back.

BEN (*tiptoes over to the door and listens*). She's cryin' now.

THE STEWARD (*furiously — shaking his fist*). God send his soul to hell for the devil he is!

(*There is the noise of someone coming slowly down the companionway stairs* THE STEWARD *hurries to his stacked-up dishes. He is so nervous from fright that he knocks off the top one, which falls and breaks on the floor. He stands aghast, trembling with dread.* BEN *is violently rubbing off the organ with a piece of cloth which he has snatched from his pocket.* CAPTAIN KEENEY *appears in the doorway on right and comes into the cabin, removing his fur cap as he does so. He is a man of about forty, around five-ten in height, but looking much shorter on account of the enormous proportions of his shoulders and chest. His face is massive and deeply lined, with gray-blue eyes of a bleak hardness, and a tightly clenched, thin-lipped mouth. His thick hair is long and gray. He is dressed in a heavy blue jacket and blue pants stuffed into his sea-boots.*

He is followed into the cabin by the SECOND MATE, a rangy six-footer with a lean, weatherbeaten face. The MATE is dressed about the same as the captain. He is a man of thirty or so.)

KEENEY. (*Comes toward the STEWARD — with a stern look on his face. The STEWARD is visibly frightened and the stack of dishes rattles in his trembling hands. KEENEY draws back his fist and the STEWARD shrinks away. The fist is gradually lowered and KEENEY speaks slowly.*) 'T would be like hitting

a worm. It is nigh on two bells, Mr. Steward, and this truck not cleared yet.

THE STEWARD (*stammering*). Y-y-yes, sir.

KEENEY. Instead of doin' your rightful work ye've been below here gossipin' old woman's talk with that boy. (*To BEN fiercely*) Get out o' this, you! Clean up the chart-room. (*BEN darts past the MATE to the open doorway.*) Pick up that dish, Mr. Steward!

THE STEWARD (*doing so with difficulty*). Yes, sir.

KEENEY. The next dish you break, Mr. Steward, you take a bath in the Bering Sea at the end of a rope.

THE STEWARD (*tremblingly*). Yes, sir.

(*He hurries out The SECOND MATE walks slowly over to the CAPTAIN.*)

MATE. I warn't 'specially anxious the man at the wheel should catch what I wanted to say to you, sir. That's why I asked you to come below.

KEENEY (*impatiently*). Speak your say, Mr. Slocum.

MATE (*unconsciously lowering his voice*). I'm afeard there'll be trouble with the hands by the look o' things. They'll likely turn ugly, every blessed one o' them, if you don't put back. The two years they signed up for is up to-day.

KEENEY. And d' you think you're tellin' me somethin' new, Mr. Slocum? I've felt it in the air this long time past. D' you think I've not seen their ugly looks and the grudgin' way they worked?

(*The door in rear is opened and MRS. KEENEY stands in the doorway. She is a slight, sweet-faced little woman primly dressed in black. Her eyes are red from weeping and her face drawn and pale. She takes in the cabin with a frightened glance and stands as if fixed to the spot by some nameless dread, clasping and unclasping her hands nervously. The two men turn and look at her.*)

KEENEY (*with rough tenderness*). Well, Annie?

MRS. KEENEY (*as if awakening from a dream*). David,
I— (*She is silent. The MATE starts for the doorway.*)

KEENEY (*turning to him — sharply*) Wait!

MATE. Yes, sir.

KEENEY. D' you want anything, Annie?

MRS. KEENEY (*after a pause, during which she seems to be endeavoring to collect her thoughts*). I thought maybe—I'd go up on deck, David, to get a breath of fresh air.

(*She stands humbly awaiting his permission. He and the MATE exchange a significant glance.*)

KEENEY. It's too cold, Annie. You'd best stay below to-day. There's nothing to look at on deck — but ice

MRS. KEENEY (*monotonously*). I know — ice, ice, ice! But there's nothing to see down here but these walls.

(*She makes a gesture of loathing.*)

KEENEY. You can play the organ, Annie.

MRS. KEENEY (*dully*). I hate the organ. It puts me in mind of home.

KEENEY (*a touch of resentment in his voice*). I got it jest for you.

MRS. KEENEY (*dully*). I know. (*She turns away from them and walks slowly to the bench on left. She lifts up one of the curtains and looks through a porthole, then utters an exclamation of joy.*) Ah, water! Clear water! As far as I can see! How good it looks after all these months of ice! (*She turns round to them, her face transfigured with joy.*) Ah, now I must go upon deck and look at it, David.

KEENEY (*frowning*). Best not to-day, Annie. Best wait for a day when the sun shines.

MRS. KEENEY (*desperately*). But the sun never shines in this terrible place.

KEENEY (*a tone of command in his voice*). Best not to-day, Annie.

MRS. KEENEY (*crumbling before this command — abjectly*). Very well, David.

(*She stands there staring straight before her as if in a daze. The two men look at her uneasily.*)

KEENEY (*sharply*). Annie!

MRS. KEENEY (*dully*). Yes, David.

KEENEY. Me and Mr. Slocum has business to talk about — ship's business.

MRS. KEENEY. Very well, David.

(*She goes slowly out, rear, and leaves the door three quarters shut behind her.*)

KEENEY. Best not have her on deck if they's goin' to be any trouble.

MATE. Yes, sir.

KEENEY. And trouble they's goin' to be. I feel it in my bones. (*Takes a revolver from the pocket of his coat and examines it.*) Got yourn?

MATE. Yes, sir.

KEENEY. Not that we'll have to use 'em — not if I know their breed of dog — jest to frighten 'em up a bit. (*Grimly*) I ain't never been forced to use one yit; and trouble I've had by land and by sea 's long as I kin remember, and will have till my dyin' day, I reckon.

MATE (*hesitatingly*). Then you ain't goin' — to turn back?

KEENEY. Turn back! Mr. Slocum, did you ever hear o' me pointin' s'uth for home with only a measly four hundred barrel of ile in the hold?

MATE (*hastily*). No, sir — but the grub's gittin' low.

KEENEY. They's enough to last a long time yit, if they're careful with it; and they's plenty o' water.

MATE. They say it's not fit to eat — what's left; and the two years they signed on fur is up to-day. They might make trouble for you in the courts when we git home.

KEENEY. To hell with 'em! Let them make what law trouble they kin. I don't give a damn 'bout the money. I've got to git the ile! (*Glancing sharply at the MATE*) You ain't turnin' no damned sea lawyer, be you, Mr. Slocum?

MATE (*flushing*). Not by a hell of a sight, sir.

KEENEY. What do the fools want to go home fur now? Their share o' the four hundred barrel would n't keep 'em in chewin' terbacco.

MATE (*slowly*). They wants to git back to their folks an' things, I s'pose.

KEENEY (*looking at him searchingly*). 'N' you want to turn back, too. (*THE MATE looks down confusedly before his sharp gaze*.) Don't lie, Mr. Slocum. It's writ down plain in your eyes. (*With grim sarcasm*) I hope, Mr. Slocum, you ain't agoin' to jine the men agin me.

MATE (*indignantly*). That ain't fair, sir, to say sich things.

KEENEY (*with satisfaction*). I warn't much afeard o' that, Tom. You been with me nigh on ten year and I've learned ye whalin'. No man kin say I ain't a good master, if I be a hard one.

MATE. I warn't thinkin' of myself, sir — 'bout turnin' home, I mean. (*Desperately*) But Mrs. Keeney, sir — seems like she ain't jest satisfied up here, ailin' like — what with the cold an' bad luck an' the ice an' all.

KEENEY (*his face clouding — rebukingly but not severely*). That's my business, Mr. Slocum. I'll thank you to steer a clear course o' that. (*A pause*.) The ice'll break up soon to no'th'rd. I could see it startin' to-day. And when it goes and we git some sun, Annie'll perk up. (*Another pause — then he bursts forth*) It ain't the damned money what's keepin' me up in the Northern seas, Tom. But I can't go back to Homeport with a measly four hundred barrel of ile. I'd die fust. I ain't never come back home in all my days without a full ship. Ain't that truth?

MATE. Yes, sir; but this voyage you been ice-bound, an' —

KEENEY (*scornfully*). And d' you s'pose any of 'em would believe that — any o' them skippers I've beaten voyage after voyage? Can't you hear 'em laughin' and sneerin' — Tibbots 'n' Harris 'n' Simms and the rest — and all o' Homeport makin' fun o' me? "Dave Keeney what boasts he's the best whalin' skipper out o' Homeport comin' back with a measly four hundred barrel of ile?" (*The thought of this drives him into a frenzy, and he smashes his fist down on the marble top of the sideboard.*) Hell! I got to git the ile, I tell you. How could I figger on this ice? It's never been so bad before in the thirty year I been a-comin' here. And now it's breakin' up. In a couple o' days it'll be all gone. And they's whale here, plenty of 'em. I know they is and I ain't never gone wrong yit. I got to git the ile! I got to git it in spite of all hell, and by God, I ain't a-goin' home till I do git it!

(*There is the sound of subdued sobbing from the door in rear. The two men stand silent for a moment, listening. Then KEENEY goes over to the door and looks in. He hesitates for a moment as if he were going to enter — then closes the door softly. JOE, the harpooner, an enormous six-footer with a battered, ugly face, enters from right and stands waiting for the captain to notice him.*)

KEENEY (*turning and seeing him*). Don't be standin' there like a gawk, Harpooner. Speak up!

JOE (*confusedly*). We want — the men, sir — they want to send a depitation aft to have a word with you.

KEENEY (*furiously*). Tell 'em to go to — (*checks himself and continues grimly*) Tell 'em to come. I'll see 'em.

JOE Aye, aye, sir.

(*He goes out.*)

KEENEY (*with a grim smile*). Here it comes, the trouble you spoke of, Mr. Slocum, and we'll make short shift of it. It's better to crush such things at the start than let them make headway.

MATE (*worriedly*). Shall I wake up the First and Fourth, sir? We might need their help.

KEENEY. No, let them sleep. I'm well able to handle this alone, Mr Slocum.

(*There is the shuffling of footsteps from outside and five of the crew crowd into the cabin, led by JOE. All are dressed alike — sweaters, sea-boots, etc. They glance uneasily at the CAPTAIN, twirling their fur caps in their hands*)

KEENEY (*after a pause*). Well? Who's to speak fur ye?

JOE (*stepping forward with an air of bravado*). I be.

KEENEY (*eyeing him up and down coldly*). So you be. Then speak your say and be quick about it.

JOE (*trying not to wilt before the CAPTAIN'S glance and avoiding his eyes*). The time we signed up for is done to-day.

KEENEY (*icily*). You're tellin' me nothin' I don't know.

JOE. You ain't p'intin' fur home yit, far's we kin see.

KEENEY. No, and I ain't agoin' to till this ship is full of ile.

JOE. You can't go no further no'the with the ice afore ye.

KEENEY. The ice is breaking up.

JOE (*after a slight pause during which the others mumble angrily to one another*). The grub we're gittin' now is rotten.

KEENEY. It's good enough fur ye. Better men than ye are have eaten worse.

(*There is a chorus of angry exclamations from the crowd.*)

JOE (*encouraged by this support*). We ain't-a-goin' to work no more 'less you puts back fur home.

KEENEY (*fiercely*). You ain't, ain't you?

JOE. No; and the law courts 'll say we was right.

KEENEY. To hell with your law courts! We're at sea now and I'm the law on this ship. (*Edging up toward the harpooner.*) And every mother's son of you what don't obey orders goes in irons.

(*There are more angry exclamations from the crew. Mrs. KEENEY appears in the doorway in rear and looks on with startled eyes. None of the men notices her*)

JOE (*with bravado*). Then we're a-goin' to mutiny and take the old hooker home ourselves. Ain't we, boys?

(*As he turns his head to look at the others, KEENEY's fist shoots out to the side of his jaw. JOE goes down in a heap and lies there. Mrs. KEENEY gives a shriek and hides her face in her hands. The men pull out their sheath knives and start a rush, but stop when they find themselves confronted by the revolvers of KEENEY and the MATE.*)

KEENEY (*his eyes and voice snapping*). Hold still! (*The men stand huddled together in a sullen silence. KEENEY's voice is full of mockery*) You've found out it ain't safe to mutiny on this ship, ain't you? And now git for'ard where ye belong, and (*he gives JOE's body a contemptuous kick*) drag him with you. And remember, the first man of ye I see shirkin' I'll shoot dead as sure as there's a sea under us, and you can tell the rest the same. Git for'ard now! Quick! (*The men leave in cowed silence, carrying JOE with them. KEENEY turns to the MATE with a short laugh and puts his revolver back in his pocket.*) Best get up on deck, Mr. Slocum, and see to it they don't try none of their skulkin' tricks. We'll have to keep an eye peeled from now on. I know 'em.

MATE. Yes, sir.

(*He goes out, right. KEENEY hears his wife's hysterical weeping and turns around in surprise — then walks slowly to her side.*)

KEENEY (*putting an arm around her shoulder — with gruff tenderness*). There, there, Annie. Don't be afeard. It's all past and gone.

MRS. KEENEY (*shrinking away from him*). Oh, I can't bear it! I can't bear it any longer!

KEENEY (*gently*). Can't bear what, Annie?

MRS. KEENEY (*hysterically*). All this horrible brutality, and these brutes of men, and this terrible ship, and this prison cell of a room, and the ice all around, and the silence.

(*After this outburst she calms down and wipes her eyes with her handkerchief.*)

KEENEY (*after a pause during which he looks down at her with a puzzled frown*). Remember, I warn't hankerin' to have you come on this voyage, Annie.

MRS. KEENEY. I wanted to be with you, David, don't you see? I did n't want to wait back there in the house all alone as I've been doing these last six years since we were married — waiting, and watching, and fearing — with nothin' to keep my mind occupied — not able to go back teaching school on account of being Dave Keeney's wife. I used to dream of sailing on the great, wide, glorious ocean. I wanted to be by your side in the danger and vigorous life of it all. I wanted to see you the hero they make you out to be in Homeport. And instead — (*her voice grows tremulous*) all I find is ice and cold — and brutality!

(*Her voice breaks.*)

KEENEY. I warned you what it'd be, Annie. "Whalin' ain't no ladies' tea party," I says to you, "and you better stay to home where you've got all your woman's comforts." (*Shaking his head*) But you was so set on it.

MRS. KEENEY (*wearily*). Oh, I know it is n't your fault, David. You see, I did n't believe you. I guess I was dreaming about the old Vikings in the story-books and I thought you were one of them.

KEENEY (*protestingly*). I done my best to make it as cozy and comfortable as could be. (MRS. KEENEY *looks around her in wild scorn*.) I even sent to the city for that organ for ye, thinkin' it might be soothin' to ye to be playin' it times when they was calms and things was dull like.

MRS. KEENEY (*wearily*). Yes, you were very kind, David. I know that (She goes to left and lifts the curtains from the porthole and looks out — then suddenly bursts forth.) I won't stand it — I can't stand it — pent up by these walls like a prisoner. (She runs over to him and throws her arms around him, weeping. He puts his arm protectingly over her shoulders.) Take me away from here, David! If I don't get away from here, out of this terrible ship, I'll go mad! Take me home, David! I can't think any more I feel as if the cold and the silence were crushing down on my brain. I'm afraid. Take me home!

KEENEY (*holds her at arm's length and looks at her face anxiously*). Best go to bed, Annie You ain't yourself. You got fever Your eyes look so strange like I ain't never seen you look this way before.

MRS. KEENEY (*laughing hysterically*). It's the ice and the cold and the silence — they'd make anyone look strange.

KEENEY (*soothingly*). In a month or two, with good luck, three at the most, I'll have her filled with ile and then we'll give her everything she'll stand and p'int for home.

MRS. KEENEY. But we can't wait for that — I can't wait. I want to get home. And the men won't wait They want to get home. It's cruel, it's brutal for you to keep them. You must sail back. You've got no excuse There's clear water to the south now. If you've a heart at all, you've got to turn back.

KEENEY (*harshly*). I can't, Annie.

MRS. KEENEY. Why can't you?

KEENEY. A woman could n't rightly understand my reason.

MRS. KEENEY (*wildly*). Because it's a stupid, stubborn reason. Oh, I heard you talking with the second mate. You're afraid the other captains will sneer at you because you did n't come back with a full ship. You want to live up to your silly reputation even if you do have to beat and starve men and drive me mad to do it.

KEENEY (*his jaw set stubbornly*). It ain't that, Annie. Them skippers would never dare sneer to my face. It ain't so much what anyone 'd say — but — (*He hesitates, struggling to express his meaning.*) You see — I've always done it — since my first voyage as skipper. I always come back — with a full ship — and — it don't seem right not to — somehow. I been always first whalin' skipper out o' Home-port, and — Don't you see my meanin', Annie? (*He glances at her. She is not looking at him but staring dully in front of her, not hearing a word he is saying.*) Annie! (*She comes to herself with a start*) Best turn in, Annie, there's a good woman. You ain't well.

MRS. KEENEY (*resisting his attempts to guide her to the door in rear*). David! Won't you please turn back?

KEENEY (*gently*). I can't, Annie — not yet awhile. You don't see my meanin'. I got to git the ile.

MRS. KEENEY. It'd be different if you needed the money, but you don't. You've got more than plenty.

KEENEY (*impatiently*). It ain't the money I'm thinkin' of. D' you think I'm as mean as that?

MRS. KEENEY (*dully*). No — I don't know — I can't understand — (*Intensely*) Oh, I want to be home in the old house once more and see my own kitchen again, and hear a woman's voice talking to me and be able to talk to her. Two years! It seems so long ago — as if I'd been dead and could never go back.

KEENEY (*worried by her strange tone and the far-away look in her eyes*). Best go to bed, Annie. You ain't well.

MRS. KEENEY (*not appearing to hear him*). I used to be lonely when you were away. I used to think Homeport was a stupid, monotonous place. Then I used to go down on the beach, especially when it was windy and the breakers were rolling in, and I'd dream of the fine free life you must be leading. (*She gives a laugh which is half a sob.*) I used to love the sea then. (*She pauses; then continues with slow intensity.*) But now — I don't ever want to see the sea again.

KEENEY (*thinking to humor her*). 'Tis no fit place for a woman, that's sure. I was a fool to bring ye.

MRS. KEENEY (*after a pause — passing her hand over her eyes with a gesture of pathetic weariness*). How long would it take us to reach home — if we started now?

KEENEY (*frowning*). 'Bout two months, I reckon, Annie, with fair luck.

MRS. KEENEY (*counts on her fingers — then murmurs with a rapt smile*). That would be August, the latter part of August, would n't it? It was on the twenty-fifth of August we were married, David, was n't it?

KEENEY (*trying to conceal the fact that her memories have moved him — gruffly*). Don't you remember?

MRS. KEENEY (*vaguely — again passes her hand over her eyes*). My memory is leaving me — up here in the ice. It was so long ago. (*A pause — then she smiles dreamily.*) It's June now. The lilacs will be all in bloom in the front yard — and the climbing roses on the trellis to the side of the house — they're budding

(*She suddenly covers her face with her hands and commences to sob.*)

KEENEY (*disturbed*). Go in and rest, Annie. You're all wore out cryin' over what can't be helped.

MRS. KEENEY (*suddenly throwing her arms around his*

neck and clinging to him). You love me, don't you, David?

KEENEY (*in amazed embarrassment at this outburst*). Love you? Why d' you ask me such a question, Annie?

MRS. KEENEY (*shaking him — fiercely*). But you do, don't you, David? Tell me!

KEENEY. I'm your husband, Annie, and you're my wife. Could there be aught but love between us after all these years?

MRS. KEENEY (*shaking him again — still more fiercely*). Then you do love me. Say it!

KEENEY (*simply*). I do, Annie.

MRS. KEENEY. (*Gives a sigh of relief — her hands drop to her sides.* KEENEY regards her anxiously. *She passes her hand across her eyes and murmurs half to herself.*) I sometimes think if we could only have had a child. (KEENEY turns away from her, deeply moved. *She grabs his arm and turns him around to face her — intensely.*) And I've always been a good wife to you, have n't I, David?

KEENEY (*his voice betraying his emotion*). No man ever had a better, Annie.

MRS. KEENEY. And I've never asked for much from you, have I, David? Have I?

KEENEY. You know you could have all I got the power to give ye, Annie.

MRS. KEENEY (*wildly*). Then do this, this once, for my sake, for God's sake — take me home! It's killing me, this life — the brutality and cold and horror of it. I'm going mad. I can feel the threat in the air. I can hear the silence threatening me — day after gray day and every day the same. I can't bear it. (*Sobbing.*) I'll go mad, I know I will. Take me home, David, if you love me as you say. I'm afraid. For the love of God, take me home!

(*She throws her arms around him, weeping against his shoulder. His face betrays the tremendous struggle going on within him. He holds her out at arm's length,*

his expression softening. For a moment his shoulders sag, he becomes old, his iron spirit weakens as he looks at her tear-stained face.)

KEENEY (*dragging out the words with an effort*). I'll do it, Annie — for your sake — if you say it's needful for ye.

MRS. KEENEY (*with wild joy — kissing him*). God bless you for that, David!

(*He turns away from her silently and walks toward the companionway. Just at that moment there is a clatter of footsteps on the stairs and the SECOND MATE enters the cabin.*)

MATE (*excitedly*). The ice is breakin' up to no'th'rd, sir. There's a clear passage through the floe, and clear water beyond, the lookout says.

(*KEENEY straightens himself like a man coming out of a trance. MRS. KEENEY looks at the MATE with terrified eyes.*)

KEENEY (*dazedly — trying to collect his thoughts*). A clear passage? To no'th'rd?

MATE. Yes, sir.

KEENEY (*his voice suddenly grim with determination*). Then get her ready and we'll drive her through.

MATE. Aye, aye, sir.

MRS. KEENEY (*appealingly*). David!

KEENEY (*not heeding her*). Will the men turn to willin' or must we drag 'em out?

MATE. They'll turn to willin' enough. You put the fear o' God into 'em, sir. They're meek as lambs.

KEENEY. Then drive 'em — both watches. (*With grim determination*) They's whale t' other side o' this floe and we're going to git 'em.

MATE. Aye, aye, sir.

(*He goes out hurriedly. A moment later there is the sound of scuffing feet from the deck outside and the MATE's voice shouting orders.*)

KEENEY (*speaking aloud to himself — derisively*). And I was a-goin' home like a yaller dog!

MRS. KEENEY (*imploringly*). David!

KEENEY (*sternly*). Woman, you ain't a-doin' right when you meddle in men's business and weaken 'em. You can't know my feelin's. I got to prove a man to be a good husband for ye to take pride in. I got to git the ile, I tell ye.

MRS. KEENEY (*supplicatingly*). David! Are n't you going home?

KEENEY (*ignoring this question — commandingly*). You ain't well. Go and lay down a mite. (*He starts for the door.*) I got to git on deck.

(*He goes out. She cries after him in anguish, "David!"*

A pause. She passes her hand across her eyes — then commences to laugh hysterically and goes to the organ. She sits down and starts to play wildly an old hymn. KEENEY reenters from the doorway to the deck and stands looking at her angrily. He comes over and grabs her roughly by the shoulder.)

KEENEY. Woman, what foolish mockin' is this? (*She laughs wildly, and he starts back from her in alarm*) Annie! What is it? (*She does n't answer him. KEENEY's voice trembles.*) Don't you know me, Annie?

(*He puts both hands on her shoulders and turns her around so that he can look into her eyes. She stares up at him with a stupid expression, a vague smile on her lips. He stumbles away from her, and she commences softly to play the organ again*)

KEENEY (*swallowing hard — in a hoarse whisper, as if he had difficulty in speaking*). You said — you was agoin' mad — God!

(*A long wail is heard from the deck above: "Ah bl-o-o-o-ow!" A moment later the MATE's face appears through the skylight. He cannot see MRS. KEENEY.*)

MATE (*in great excitement*). Whales, sir — a whole school

of 'em — off the starb'd quarter 'bout five mile away — big ones'

KEENEY (*galvanized into action*). Are you lowerin' the boats?

MATE. Yes, sir.

KEENEY (*with grim decision*). I'm a-comin' with ye.

MATE. Aye, aye, sir. (*Jubilantly*) You'll git the ile now right enough, sir.

(*His head is withdrawn and he can be heard shouting orders.*)

KEENEY (*turning to his wife*). Annie! Did you hear him? I'll git the ile. (*She does n't answer or seem to know he is there. He gives a hard laugh, which is almost a groan.*) I know you're foolin' me, Annie. You ain't out of your mind — (*anxiously*) be you? I'll git the ile now right enough — jest a little while longer, Annie — then we'll turn hom'ard. I can't turn back now, you see that, don't ye? I've got to git the ile. (*In sudden terror*) Answer me! You ain't mad, be you?

(*She keeps on playing the organ, but makes no reply.*

The MATE's face appears again through the skylight.)

MATE. All ready, sir.

(*KEENEY turns his back on his wife and strides to the doorway, where he stands for a moment and looks back at her in anguish, fighting to control his feelings.*)

MATE. Comin', sir?

KEENEY (*his face suddenly grown hard with determination*). Aye.

(*He turns abruptly and goes out. MRS. KEENEY does not appear to notice his departure. Her whole attention seems centred in the organ. She sits with half-closed eyes, her body swaying a little from side to side to the rhythm of the hymn. Her fingers move faster and faster and she is playing wildly and discordantly as the Curtain falls.*)

CAMPBELL OF KILMHOR¹

J. A. FERGUSON

CHARACTERS

MARY STEWART

MORAG CAMERON

DUGALD STEWART

CAPTAIN SANDEMAN

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL

JAMES MACKENZIE

SCENE: Interior of a lonely cottage on the road from Struan to Rannoch in North Perthshire.

TIME: After the Rising of 1745

MORAG is restlessly moving backwards and forwards. The old woman is seated on a low stool beside the peat fire in the centre of the floor.

The room is scantily furnished and the women are poorly clad. MORAG is barefooted. At the back is the door that leads to the outside. On the left of the door is a small window. On the right side of the room there is a door that opens into a barn. MORAG stands for a moment at the window, looking out.

¹ Included by special permission of the publishers, Messrs. Gowans and Gray, Glasgow

MORAG. It is the wild night outside.

MARY STEWART. Is the snow still coming down?

MORAG. It is that, then — dancing and swirling with the wind too, and never stopping at all Aye, and so black I cannot see the other side of the road.

MARY STEWART. That is good.

(MORAG moves across the floor and stops irresolutely. She is restless, expectant.)

MORAG. Will I be putting the light in the window?

MARY STEWART. Why should you be doing that? You have not heard his call (*turns eagerly*), have you?

MORAG (*with sign of head*). No, but the light in the window would show him all is well.

MARY STEWART. It would not, then! The light was to be put there *after* we had heard the signal.

MORAG. But on a night like this he may have been calling for long and we never hear him.

MARY STEWART. Do not be so anxious, Morag. Keep to what he says. Put more peat on the fire now and sit down.

MORAG (*with increasing excitement*). I canna, I canna! There is that in me that tells me something is going to befall us this night. Oh, that wind! Hear to it, sobbing round the house as if it brought some poor lost soul up to the door, and we refusing it shelter.

MARY STEWART. Do not be fretting yourself like that. Do as I bid you. Put more peats to the fire.

MORAG (*at the wicker peat-basket*). Never since I . . . What was that?

(Both listen for a moment.)

MARY STEWART. It was just the wind; it is rising more. A sore night for them that are out in the heather.

(MORAG puts peat on the fire without speaking.)

MARY STEWART. Did you notice were there many people going by to-day?

MORAG. No. After daybreak the redcoats came by from Struan; and there was no more till nine, when an old man like the Catechist from Killichonan passed. At four o'clock, just when the dark was falling, a horseman with a lad holding to the stirrup, and running fast, went by towards Rannoch.

MARY STEWART. But no more redcoats?

MORAG (*shaking her head*). The road has been as quiet as the hills, and they as quiet as the grave. Do you think will he come?

MARY STEWART. Is it you think I have the gift, girl, that you ask me that? All I know is that it is five days since he was here for meat and drink for himself and for the others — five days and five nights, mind you; and little enough he took away; and those in hiding no' used to such sore lying, I'll be thinking. He must try to get through to-night. But that quietness, with no one to be seen from daylight till dark, I do not like it, Morag. They must know something. They must be watching.

(*A sound is heard by both women. They stand listening.*)

MARY STEWART. Haste you with the light, Morag.

MORAG. But it came from the back of the house — from the hillside.

MARY STEWART. Do as I tell you. The other side may be watched.

(*A candle is lit and placed in the window. Girl goes hurrying to the door.*)

MARY STEWART. Stop, stop! Would you be opening the door with a light like that shining from the house? A man would be seen against it in the doorway for a mile. And who knows what eyes may be watching? Put out the light now and cover the fire.

(*Room is reduced to semi-darkness, and the door unbarred. Someone enters.*)

MORAG. You are cold, Dugald!

(STEWART, *very exhausted, signs assent.*)

MORAG. And wet, oh, wet through and through!

STEWART. Erricht Brig was guarded, well guarded. I had to win across the water.

(*The old woman has now relit candle and taken away plaid from fire.*)

MARY STEWART. Erricht Brig — then —

STEWART (*nods*). Yes — in a corrie, on the far side of Dearig, half-way up.

MARY STEWART. Himself is there then?

STEWART. Aye, and Keppoch as well, and another and a greater is with them.

MARY STEWART. Wheest! (*Glances at MORAG.*)

STEWART. Mother, is it that you can —

MARY STEWART. Yes, yes, Morag will bring out the food for ye to carry back. It is under the hay in the barn, well hid. Morag will bring it. — Go, Morag, and bring it.

(MORAG *enters other room or barn which opens on right.*)

STEWART. Mother, I wonder at ye, Morag would never tell — never.

MARY STEWART. Morag is only a lass yet. She has never been tried. And who knows what she might be made to tell.

STEWART Well, well, it is no matter, for I was telling you where I left them, but not where I am to *find* them.

MARY STEWART. They are not where you said now?

STEWART. No; they left the corrie last night, and I am to find them (*whispers*) in a quiet part on Rannoch moor.

MARY STEWART. It is as well for a young lass not to be knowing. Do not tell her.

(*He sits down at table; the old woman ministers to his wants.*)

STEWART A fire is a merry thing on a night like this; and a roof over the head is a great comfort.

MARY STEWART. Ye'll no' can stop the night?

STEWART. No. I must be many a mile from here before the day breaks on Ben Dearig.

(MORAG reenters.)

MORAG. It was hard to get through, Dugald?

STEWART. You may say that. I came down Erricht for three miles, and then when I reached low country I had to take to walking in the burns because of the snow that shows a man's steps and tells who he is to them that can read; and there's plenty can do that abroad, God knows.

MORAG. But none spied ye?

STEWART. Who can tell? Before dark came, from far up on the slopes of Dearig I saw soldiers about; and away towards the Rannoch Moor they were scattered all over the country like black flies on a white sheet. A wild cat or anything that couldna fly could never have got through. And men at every brig and ford and pass! I had to strike away up across the slopes again; and even so as I turned round the bend beyond Kilrain I ran straight into a sentry sheltering behind a great rock. But after that it was easy going.

MORAG. How could that be?

STEWART. Well, you see I took the boots off him, and then I had no need to mind who might see my steps in the snow.

MORAG. You took the boots off him!

STEWART (*laughing*). I did that same. Does that puzzle your bonny head? How does a lad take the boots off a red-coat? Find out the answer, my lass, while I will be finishing my meat.

MORAG. Maybe he was asleep?

STEWART. Asleep! Asleep! Well, well, he sleeps sound enough now, with the ten toes of him pointed to the sky.

(*The old woman has taken up dirk from table. She puts it down again. MORAG sees the action and pushes dirk*

*away so that it rolls off the table and drops to the floor.
She hides her face in her hands.)*

MARY STEWART. Morag, bring in the kebbuck o' cheese
Now that all is well and safe it is we that will look after his
comfort to-night. (MORAG goes into barn.) — I mind well
her mother saying to me — it was one day in the black win-
ter that she died, when the frost took the land in its grip
and the birds fell stiff from the trees, and the deer came
down and put their noses to the door — I mind well her
saying just before she died —

(*Loud knocking at the door.*)

A VOICE. In the King's name'

(*Both rise.*)

MARY STEWART. The hay in the barn, quick, my son
(*Knocking continues.*)

A VOICE. Open in the King's name!

(*STEWART snatches up such articles as would reveal his
presence and hurries into barn. He overlooks dirk on
floor. The old woman goes towards door.*)

MARY STEWART. Who is there? What do you want?

A VOICE. Open, open.

(*MARY STEWART opens door and CAMPBELL OF
KILMHOR follows CAPTAIN SANDEMAN into the
house. Behind KILMHOR comes a man carrying a
leather wallet, JAMES MACKENZIE, his clerk. The
rear is brought up by soldiers carrying arms*)

SANDEMAN. Ha, the bird has flown.

CAMPBELL (*who has struck dirk with his foot and picked it
up*). But the nest is warm, look at this.

SANDEMAN. It seems as if we had disturbed him at sup-
per. Search the house, men.

MARY STEWART. I'm just a lonely old woman. You
have been misguided. I was getting through my supper.

CAMPBELL (*holding up dirk*). And this was your tooth-

pick, eh? Na! Na! We ken whaur we are, and wha we want, and by Cruachan, I think we've got him.

(*Sounds are heard from barn, and soldiers return with MORAG. She has stayed in hiding from fear, and she still holds the cheese in her hands.*)

SANDEMAN. What have we here?

CAMPBELL. A lass!

MARY STEWART. It's just my dead brother's daughter. She was getting me the cheese, as you can see.

CAMPBELL. On, men, again: the other turtle doo will no' be far away. (*Banteringly to the old woman*) Tut, tut, Mistress Stewart, and do ye have her wait upon ye while your leddyship dines alone! A grand way to treat your dead brother's daughter, fie, fie, upon ye!

(*Soldiers reappear with STEWART, whose arms are pinioned.*)

CAMPBELL. Did I no' tell ye! And this, Mrs. Stewart, will be your dead sister's son, I'm thinking; or aiblins your leddyship's butler! Weel, woman, I'll tell ye this: Pharaoh spared ae butler, but Erchie Campbell will no' spare anither. Na! na! Pharaoh's case is no' to be taken as forming ony preceedent. And so if he doesna answer certain questions we have to speir at him, before morning he'll hang as high as Haman.

(*STEWART is placed before the table at which CAMPBELL has seated himself. Two soldiers guard STEWART. Another is behind CAMPBELL'S chair and another is by the door. The clerk, MACKENZIE, is seated at up corner of table. SANDEMAN stands by the fire*)

CAMPBELL (*to STEWART*). Weel, sir, it is within the cognizance of the law that you have knowledge and information of the place of harbor and concealment used by certain persons who are in a state of proscription. Furthermore, it is known that four days ago certain

other proscribed persons did join with these, and that they are banded together in an endeavor to secure the escape from these dominions of His Majesty, King George, of certain persons who by their crimes and treasons lie open to the capital charge What say ye?

(STEWART makes no reply.)

CAMPBELL. Ye admit this then?

(STEWART as before.)

CAMPBELL. Come, come, my lad. Ye stand in great jeopardy. Great affairs of state lie behind this which are beyond your simple understanding Speak up and it will be the better for ye

(STEWART silent as before.)

CAMPBELL. Look you. I'll be frank with you. No harm will befall you this night — and I wish all in this house to note my words — no harm will befall you this night if you supply the information required.

(STEWART as before.)

CAMPBELL (*with sudden passion*). Sandeman, put your sword to the carcass o' this muckle ass and see will it louse his tongue.

STEWART. It may be as well then, Mr. Campbell, that I should say a word to save your breath. It is this: Till you talk Rannoch Loch to the top of Schiehallion, ye'll no' talk me into a yea or nay.

CAMPBELL (*quietly*). Say ye so? Noo, I widna be so very sure if I were you. I've had a lairge experience o' life, and speaking out of it I would say that only fools and the dead never change their minds

STEWART (*quietly too*). Then you'll be adding to your experience to-night, Mr. Campbell, and you'll have something to put on to the other side of it.

CAMPBELL (*tapping his snuff-box*). Very possibly, young sir, but what I would present for your consideration is this:

While ye may be prepared to keep your mouth shut under the condition of a fool, are ye equally prepared to do so in the condition of a dead man?

(CAMPBELL *waits expectantly*. STEWART *silent as before*.)

CAMPBELL. Tut, tut, now, if it's afraid ye are, my lad, with my hand on my heart and on my word as a gentleman —

STEWART. Afraid'

(*He spits in contempt towards CAMPBELL.*)

CAMPBELL (*enraged*). Ye damned stubborn Hieland stot. (To SANDEMAN) Have him taken out. We'll get it another way.

(CAMPBELL *rises*. STEWART *is moved into barn by soldiers.*)

CAMPBELL (*walking*). Some puling eediots, Sandeman, would applaud this contumacy and call it constancy. Constancy! Now, I've had a lairge experience o' life, and I never saw yet a sensible man insensible to the touch of yellow metal. If there may be such a man, it is demonstrable that he is no sensible man. Fideelity! quotha, it's sheer obstinacy. They just see that ye want something oot o' them, and they're so damned selfish and thrawn they winna pairt. And with the natural inabeelity o' their brains to hold mair than one idea at a time they canna see that in return you could put something into their palms far more profitable. (*Sits again at table.*) Aweel, bring Mistress Stewart up.

(*Old woman is placed before him where son had been.*)

CAMPBELL (*more ingratiatingly*). Weel noo, Mistress Stewart, good woman, this is a sair predeecament for ye to be in. I would jist counsel ye to be candid. Doubtless yer mind is a' in a swirl. Ye kenna what way to turn. Maybe ye are like the Psalmist and say: "I lookit this way and that, and there was no man to peety me, or to have com-

passion upon my fatherless children." But, see now, ye would be wrong; and, if ye tell me a' ye ken, I'll stand freends wi' ye. Put your trust in Erchie Campbell.

MARY STEWART. I trust no Campbell.

CAMPBELL. Weel, weel noo, I'm no' jist that set up wi' them myself. There's but ae Campbell that I care muckle aboot, after a'. But, good wife, it's no' the Campbells we're trying the noo; so as time presses we'll jist "*birze yont*," as they say themselves. Noo then, speak up.

(MARY STEWART is silent.)

CAMPBELL (*beginning grimly and passing through astonishment, expostulation, and a feigned contempt for mother and pity for son, to a pretence of sadness which, except at the end, makes his words come haltingly*). Ah' ye also. I suppose ye understand, woman, how it will go wi' your son? (*To his clerk*) Here's a fine mother for ye, James! Would you believe it? She kens what would save her son — the very babe she nursed at her breast; but will she save him? Na! na! Sir, he may look after himself! A mother, a mother! Ha! ha!

(CAMPBELL laughs. MACKENZIE *titters foolishly*. CAMPBELL pauses to watch effect of his words.)

Aye, you would think, James, that she would remember the time when he was but little and afraid of all the terrors that walk in darkness, and how he looked up to her as to a tower of safety, and would run to her with outstretched hands, hiding his face from his fear, in her gown. The darkness! It is the dark night and a long journey before him now.

(He pauses again.)

You would think, James, that she would mind how she happit him from the cold of winter and sheltered him from the summer heats, and, when he began to find his footing, how she had an eye on a' the beasts of the field and on the water and the fire that were become her enemies — And to

what purpose all this care? — tell me that, my man, to what good, if she is to leave him at the last to dangle from a tree at the end of a hempen rope — to see his flesh given to be meat for the fowls of the air — her son, her little son!

MARY STEWART. My son is guilty of no crime!

CAMPBELL. Is he no'! Weel, mistress, as ye'll no' take my word for it, maybe ye'll list to Mr. Mackenzie here. What say ye, James?

MACKENZIE. He is guilty of aiding and abetting in the concealment of proscribed persons; likewise with being found in the possession of arms, contrary to statute, both very heinous crimes.

CAMPBELL. Very well said, James! Forby, between ourselves, Mrs. Stewart, the young man in my opeenion is guilty of another crime (*snuffs*) — he is guilty of the heinous crime of not knowing on which side his bread is buttered. — Come now —

MARY STEWART. Ye durst not lay a finger on the lad, ye durst not hang him.

MACKENZIE. And why should the gentleman not hang him if it pleasure him?

(CAMPBELL taps snuff-box and takes pinch.)

MARY STEWART (*with intensity*). Campbell of Kilmhor, lay but one finger on Dugald Stewart and the weight of Ben Cruachan will be light to the weight that will be laid on your soul. I will lay the curse of the seven rings upon your life: I will call up the fires of Ephron, the blue and the green and the gray fires, for the destruction of your soul: I will curse you in your homestead and in the wife it shelters and in the children that will never bear your name. Yea, and ye shall be cursed.

CAMPBELL. (Startled — betrays agitation — the snuff is spilled from his trembling hand.) Hoot toot, woman! ye're, ye're — (Angrily) Ye auld beldame, to say such things

to me! I'll have ye first whippet and syne droont for a witch. Damn thaе stubborn and superstetious cattle! (To SANDEMAN) We should have come in here before him and listened in the barn, Sandeman!

SANDEMAN. Ah, listen behind the door you mean! Now I never thought of that!

CAMPBELL. Did ye not! Humph! Well, no doubt there are a good many things in the universe that yet wait for your thought upon them. What would be your objections, now?

SANDEMAN. There are two objections, Kilmhor, that you would understand.

CAMPBELL. Name them,

SANDEMAN. Well, in the first place, we have not wings like crows to fly — and the footsteps on the snow — Second point — the woman would have told him we were there.

CAMPBELL. Not if I told her I had power to clap her in Inverness jail.

MARY STEWART (*in contempt*). Yes, even if ye had told me ye had power to clap me in hell, Mr. Campbell.

CAMPBELL. Lift me that screeching Jezebel oot o' here; Sandeman, we'll mak' a quick finish o' this. (*Soldiers take her towards barn*.) No, not there; pitch the old girzie into the snow.

MARY STEWART. Ye'll never find him, Campbell, never, never!

CAMPBELL (*enraged*). Find him! Aye, by God I'll find him, if I have to keek under every stone on the mountains from the Boar of Badenoch to the Sow of Athole. (*Old woman and soldiers go outside*.) And now, Captain Sandeman, you an' me must have a word or two. I noted your objection to listening ahint doors and so on. Now, I make a' necessary allowances for youth and the grand and magnificient ideas commonly held, for a little while, in that

period. I had them myself. But, man, gin ye had trod the floor of the Parliament Hoose in Edinburry as long as I did, wi' a pair o' thin hands at the bottom o' toom pockets, ye'd ha'e shed your fine notions, as I did. Noo, fine pernickety noansense will no' do in this business —

SANDEMAN. Sir!

CAMPBELL. Softly, softly, Captain Sandeman, and hear till what I have to say. I have noticed with regret several things in your remarks and bearing which are displeasing to me. I would say just one word in your ear; it is this. These things, Sandeman, are not conducive to advancement in His Majesty's service.

SANDEMAN. Kilmhor, I am a soldier, and if I speak out my mind, you must pardon me if my words are blunt. I do not like this work, but I loathe your methods.

CAMPBELL Mislike the methods you may, but the work ye must do! Methods are my business. Let me tell you the true position. In ae word it is no more and no less than this. You and me are baith here to carry out the prooveesions of the Act for the Pacification of the Highlands. That means the cleaning up of a very big mess, Sandeman, a very big mess. Now, what is your special office in this work? I'll tell ye, man; you and your men are just beesoms in the hands of the law-officers of the Crown. In this district, I order and ye soop! (*He indicates door of barn.*) Now soop, Captain Sandeman.

SANDEMAN (*in some agitation*). What is your purpose? What are you after? I would give something to see into your mind.

CAMPBELL. Ne'er fash aboot my mind: what has a soldier to do with ony mental operations? It's His Grace's orders that concern you. Oot wi' your man and set him up against the wa'.

SANDEMAN. Kilmhor, it is murder — murder, Kilmhor!

CAMPBELL. Hoots, awa', man, it's a thing o' nae special signefficance.

SANDEMAN. I must ask you for a warrant.

CAMPBELL. Quick then: Mackenzie will bring it out to you.

(CLERK *begins writing*. SANDEMAN and soldiers lead STEWART outside. CAMPBELL sits till they are out. CLERK *finishes*, CAMPBELL *signs warrant* — and former goes. CAMPBELL is alone, save for MORAG CAMERON, who is sitting huddled up on stool by fire, and is unnoticed by CAMPBELL)

CAMPBELL (*as one speaking his thoughts aloud*) I've been beaten for a' that. A strange thing, noo. Beforehand I would ha'e said naething could be easier. And yet — and yet — there it is! . . . It would have been a grand stroke for me . . . Cluny — Keppoch — Lochiel, and maybe . . . maybe — Hell! when I think of it! Just a whispered word — a mere pointed finger would ha'e telled a'. But no! their visions, their dreams beat me. "You'll be adding to your experience to-night, Mr. Campbell, and have something to put to the other side of it," says he; aye, and by God I have added something to it, and it is a thing I like but little — that a dream can be stronger than a strong man armed. — Here come I, Archibald Campbell of Kilmhor, invested with authority as law-officer of the Crown, bearing in my hand the power of life and death, fire and the sword, backed up by the visible authority of armed men, and yet I am powerless before the dreams of an old woman and a half-grown lad — soldiers and horses and the gallows and yellow gold are less than the wind blowing in their faces. — It is a strange thing that: it is a thing I do not understand. — It is a thing fit to sicken a man against the notion that there are probabeelities on this earth. — I have been beaten for a'

that. Aye, the pair o' them have beat me — though it's a matter of seconds till one of them be dead.

MORAG (*starting into upright position and staring at him; her voice is like an echo to his*). Dead!

CAMPBELL (*turning hastily*). What is that!

MORAG. Is he dead?

CAMPBELL (*grimly*). Not yet, but if ye'll look through this window (*he indicates window*) presently, ye'll see him gotten ready for death.

(*He begins to collect articles of personal property, hat, etc.*)

MORAG. I will tell you.

CAMPBELL (*astounded*). What!

MORAG. I will tell you all you are seeking to know.

CAMPBELL (*quietly*). Good God, and to think, to think I was on the very act — in the very act of — tell me — tell me at once.

MORAG. You will promise that he will not be hanged?

CAMPBELL. He will not. I swear it.

MORAG. You will give him back to me?

CAMPBELL. I will give him back unhung.

MORAG. Then (*CAMPBELL comes near*), in a corrie half-way up the far side of Dearig — God save me!

CAMPBELL. Dished after a'. I've clean dished them! Loard, Loard' once more I can believe in the rationality of Thy world. (*Gathers up again his cloak, hat, etc.*) And to think — to think — I was on the very act of going away like a beaten dog!

MORAG. He is safe from hanging now?

CAMPBELL (*chuckles and looks out at window before replying, and is at door when he speaks*). Very near it, very near it. Listen!

(*He holds up his hand — a volley of musketry is heard.*

KILMHOR goes out, closing the door behind him. After

a short interval of silence the old woman enters and advances a few steps.)

MARY STEWART. Did you hear, Morag Cameron, did you hear?

(The girl is sobbing, her head on her arms.)

MARY STEWART. Och' be quiet now; I would be listening till the last sound of it passes into the great hills and over all the wide world. — It is fitting for you to be crying, a child that cannot understand, but water shall never wet eye of mine for Dugald Stewart. Last night I was but the mother of a lad that herded sheep on the Athole hills: this morn it is I that am the mother of a man who is among the great ones of the earth. All over the land they will be telling of Dugald Stewart. Mothers will teach their children to be men by him. High will his name be with the teller of fine tales. — The great men came, they came in their pride, terrible like the storm they were, and cunning with words of guile were they. Death was with them. . . . He was but a lad, a young lad, with great length of days before him, and the grandeur of the world. But he put it all from him. "Speak," said they, "speak, and life and great riches will be for yourself." But he said no word at all! Loud was the swelling of their wrath! Let the heart of you rejoice, Morag Cameron, for the snow is red with his blood. There are things greater than death. Let them that are children shed the tears.

(She comes forward and lays her hand on the girl's shoulder)

MARY STEWART. Let us go and lift him into the house, and not be leaving him lie out there alone.

[CURTAIN]

THE SUN¹

JOHN GALSWORTHY

SCENE: A GIRL sits crouched over her knees on a stile close to a river. A MAN with a silver badge stands beside her clutching the worn top plank. THE GIRL's level brows are drawn together; her eyes see her memories. THE MAN's eyes see THE GIRL; he has a dark, twisted face. The bright sun shines; the quiet river flows; the cuckoo is calling; the mayflower is in bloom along the hedge that ends in the stile on the towing-path.

THE GIRL. God knows what 'e'll say, Jim.

THE MAN. Let 'im. 'E's come too late, that's all.

THE GIRL. He could n't come before. I'm frightened.
'E was fond o' me.

THE MAN. And are n't I fond of you? My Gawd!

THE GIRL. I ought to 'a' waited, Jim; with 'im in the fightin'.

THE MAN (*passionately*). And what about me? Are n't I been in the fightin' — earned all I could get?

THE GIRL (*touching him*). Ah!

THE MAN. Did you —

(*He cannot speak the words.*)

THE GIRL Not like you, Jim — not like you.

THE MAN. 'Ave a spirit, then.

¹ From *Scribner's Magazine*, May, 1919 Copyright by Charles Scribner's Sons, included by special permission of the writer and publishers.

THE GIRL. I promised 'im.

THE MAN. One man's luck's another's poison I've seen it.

THE GIRL. I ought to 'a' waited. I never thought 'e'd come back from the fightin'.

THE MAN (*grimly*) Maybe 'e'd better not 'ave.

THE GIRL (*looking back along the tow-path*). What'll 'e be like, I wonder?

THE MAN (*gripping her shoulder*). Daise, don't you never go back on me, or I should kill you, and 'im too

(THE GIRL looks at him, shivers, and puts her lips to his.)

THE GIRL. I never could.

THE MAN Will you run for it? 'E'd never find us.

(THE GIRL shakes her head.)

THE MAN (*dully*). What's the good o' stayin'? The world's wide.

THE GIRL I'd rather have it off me mind, with him 'ome.

THE MAN (*clenching his hands*). It's temptin' Providence.

THE GIRL. What's the time, Jim?

THE MAN (*glancing at the sun*) 'Alf past four.

THE GIRL (*looking along the towing-path*). 'E said four o'clock. Jim, you better go.

THE MAN. Not I. I've not got the wind up. I've seen as much of hell as he has, any day. What like is he?

THE GIRL (*dully*) I dunno, just I've not seen 'im these three years. I dunno no more, since I've known you.

THE MAN. Big, or little chap?

THE GIRL. 'Bout your size Oh! Jim, go along!

THE MAN. No fear! What's a blighter like that to old Fritz's shells? We did n't shift when they was comin'. If you'll go, I'll go; not else.

(Again she shakes her head.)

THE GIRL. Jim, do you love me true? (*For answer, THE MAN takes her avidly in his arms.*) I ain't ashamed — I ain't ashamed. If 'e could see me 'eart.

THE MAN. Daise! If I'd known you out there I never could 'a' stuck it. They'd 'a' got me for a deserter. That's 'ow I love you!

THE GIRL. Jim, don't lift your 'and to 'im Promise!

THE MAN. That's according.

THE GIRL. Promise!

THE MAN. If 'e keeps quiet, I won't. But I'm not accountable — not always, I tell you straight — not since I've been through that.

THE GIRL (*with a shiver*). Nor p'r'aps 'e is n't.

THE MAN. Like as not. It takes the lynchpins out, I tell you.

THE GIRL. God 'elp us!

THE MAN (*grimly*). Ah! We said that a bit too often. What we want, we take, now; there's no one to give it us, and there's no fear'll stop us; we seen the bottom o' things.

THE GIRL. P'r'aps 'e'll say that too.

THE MAN. Then it'll be 'im or me.

THE GIRL. I'm frightened.

THE MAN (*tenderly*). No, Daise, no! (*He takes out a knife.*) The river's 'andy. One more or less. 'E shan't 'arm you; nor me neither.

THE GIRL (*seizing his hand*). Oh! no! Give it to me, Jim!

THE MAN (*smiling*). No fear! (*He puts it away.*) Shan't 'ave no need for it, like as not. All right, little Daise; you can't be expected to see things like what we do. What's a life, anyway? I've seen a thousand taken in five minutes. I've seen dead men on the wires like flies on a fly-paper; I've been as good as dead meself an 'undred times. I've killed a dozen men. It's nothin'. 'E's safe, if 'e don't get

my blood up. If 'e does, nobody's safe; not 'im, nor anybody else, not even you. I'm speakin' sober.

THE GIRL (*softly*). Jim, you won't go fightin', wi' the sun out and the birds all callin'?

THE MAN. That depends on 'im. I'm not lookin' for it. Daise, I love you. I love your eyes. I love your hair. I love you.

THE GIRL. And I love you, Jim. I don't want nothin' more than you in the whole world.

THE MAN. Amen to that, my dear. Kiss me close!

(*The sound of a voice singing breaks in on their embrace.*

THE GIRL starts from his arms and looks behind her along the towing-path. THE MAN draws back against the hedge, fingering his side, where the knife is hidden. *The song comes nearer.*)

I'll be right there to-night
Where the fields are snowy white;
Banjos ringn', darkies singin'—
All the world seems bright

THE GIRL. It's 'im!

THE MAN. Don't get the wind up, Daise. I'm here!

(*The singing stops. A man's voice says: Christ! It's Daise; it's little Daise 'erself!* THE GIRL stands rigid. *The figure of a soldier appears on the other side of the stile. His cap is tucked into his belt, his hair is bright in the sunshine; he is lean, wasted, brown, and laughing.*)

SOLDIER. Daise! Daise! Hallo, old pretty girl!

(*THE GIRL does not move, barring the way, as it were.*)

THE GIRL Hallo, Jack! (*Softly*) I got things to tell you.

SOLDIER. What sort o' things, this lovely day? Why, I got things that'd take me years to tell. 'Ave you missed me, Daise?

THE GIRL You been so long.

SOLDIER. So I 'ave. My Gawd! It's a way they 'ave in the Army. I said when I got out of it I'd laugh. Like as the sun itself I used to think of you, Daise, when the crumps was comin' over, and the wind was up. D' you remember that last night in the wood? "Come back, and marry me quick, Jack!" Well, 'ere I am — got me pass to 'eaven. No more fightin', an' trampin', no more sleepin' rough. We can get married now, Daise. We can live soft an' appy. Give us a kiss, old pretty.

THE GIRL (*drawing back*). No.

SOLDIER (*blankly*). Why not?

(THE MAN, with a swift movement, steps along the hedge to THE GIRL'S side.)

THE MAN. That's why, soldier.

SOLDIER (*leaping over the stile*). 'Oo are you, Pompey? The sun don't shine in your inside, do it? 'Oo is 'e, Daise?

THE GIRL. My man.

SOLDIER. Your — man! Lummy! "Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief"! Well, soldier? So you've been through it, too I'm laughin' this mornin', as luck will 'ave it. Ah! I can see your knife.

THE MAN (*who has half drawn his knife*). Don't laugh at me, I tell you.

SOLDIER. Not at you, soldier, not at you. (*He looks from one to the other*.) I'm laughin' at things in general. Where did you get it, soldier?

THE MAN (*watchfully*). Through the lung.

SOLDIER. Think o' that! An' I never was touched. Four years an' never was touched. An' so you've come an' took my girl. Nothin' doin'! Ha! (*Again he looks from one to the other — then away*.) Well! The world's before me. (*He laughs*.) I'll give you Daise for a lung protector.

THE MAN (*fiercely*). You won't. I've took her.

SOLDIER. That's all right, then. You keep 'er I've got a laugh in me you can't put out, black as you are! Good-bye, little Daise!

(THE GIRL makes a movement toward him)

THE MAN. Don't touch 'im!

(THE GIRL stands hesitating, and suddenly bursts into tears.)

SOLDIER. Look 'ere, soldier, shake 'ands' I don't want to see a girl cry, this day of all, with the sun shinin'. I seen too much o' sorrer. You an' me've been at the back of it. We've 'ad our whack. Shake!

THE MAN. Who are you kiddin'? You never loved 'er!

SOLDIER. Oh! I thought I did.

THE MAN (*fiercely*). I'll fight you for her.

(He drops his knife.)

SOLDIER (*slowly*). Soldier, you done your bit, an' I done mine. It's took us two ways, seemin'ly.

THE GIRL (*pleading*). Jim!

THE MAN (*with clenched fists*). I don't want 'is charity. I only want what I can take.

SOLDIER. Daise, which of us will you 'ave?

THE GIRL (*covering her face*). Oh! Him.

SOLDIER. You see, soldier! Drop your 'ands, now. There's nothin' for it but a laugh You an' me know that. Laugh, soldier!

THE MAN. You blarsted —

(THE GIRL springs to him and stops his mouth.)

SOLDIER. It's no use, soldier. I can't do it. I said I'd laugh to-day, and laugh I will. I've come through that, an' all the stink of it; I've come through sorrer. Never again! Cheer-o, mate! The sun's shinin'!

(He turns away)

THE GIRL. Jack, don't think too 'ard of me!

SOLDIER (*looking back*). No fear, old pretty girl! Enjoy your fancy! So long! Gawd bless you both!

(*He sings and goes along the path, and the song —*

I'll be right there to-night
Where the fields are snowy white;
Banjos ringin', darkies singin' —
All the world seems bright! —

fades away.)

THE MAN. 'E's mad.

THE GIRL (*looking down the path, with her hands clasped*).
The sun 'as touched 'im, Jim!

[CURTAIN]

THE KNAVE OF HEARTS¹

LOUISE SAUNDERS

CHARACTERS

THE MANAGER

BLUE HOSE

YELLOW HOSE

1ST HERALD

2D HERALD

POMPDEBILE THE EIGHTH, KING OF HEARTS
(pronounced Pomp-dibiley)

THE CHANCELLOR

THE KNAVE OF HEARTS

URSULA

THE LADY VIOLETTA

SIX LITTLE PAGES

(THE MANAGER *appears before the curtain in doublet and hose. He carries a cap with a long, red feather.*)

THE MANAGER (*bowing deeply*). Ladies and gentlemen, you are about to hear the truth of an old legend that has persisted wrongly through the ages, the truth that, until now, has been hid behind the embroidered curtain of a rhyme, about the Knave of Hearts, who was no knave but a very hero indeed. The truth, you will agree with me,

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gentlemen and most honored ladies, is rare! It is only the quiet, unimpassioned things of nature that seem what they are. Clouds rolled in massy radiance against the blue, pines shadowed deep and darkly green, mirrored in still waters, the contemplative mystery of the hills — these things which exist, absorbed but in their own existence — these are the perfect chalices of truth.

But we, gentlemen and thrice-honored ladies, flounder about in a tangled net of prejudice, of intrigue. We are blinded by conventions, we are crushed by misunderstanding, we are distracted by violence, we are deceived by hypocrisy, until only too often villains receive the rewards of nobility and the truly great-hearted are suspected, distrusted, and maligned.

And so, ladies and gentlemen, for the sake of justice and also, I dare to hope, for your approval, I have taken my puppets down from their dusty shelves. I have polished their faces, brushed their clothes, and strung them on wires, so that they may enact for you this history.

(He parts the curtains, revealing two PASTRY COOKS in flaring white caps and spotless aprons leaning over in stiff profile, their wooden spoons, three feet long, pointing rigidly to the ceiling. They are in one of the kitchens of POMPDEBILE THE EIGHTH, KING OF HEARTS. It is a pleasant kitchen, with a row of little dormer windows and a huge stove, adorned with the crest of POMPDEBILE — a heart rampant, on a gold shield.)

THE MANAGER. You see here, ladies and gentlemen, two pastry cooks belonging to the royal household of Pompdebole the Eighth — Blue Hose and Yellow Hose, by name. At a signal from me they will spring to action, and as they have been made with astonishing cleverness, they will bear every semblance of life. Happily, however, you need have no fear that, should they please you, the exulting

wine of your appreciation may go to their heads — their heads being but things of wire and wood; and happily, too, as they are but wood and wire, they will be spared the shame and humiliation that would otherwise be theirs should they fail to meet with your approval.

The play, most honored ladies and gentlemen, will now begin.

(*He claps his hands. Instantly the two PASTRY COOKS come to life. THE MANAGER bows himself off the stage*)

BLUE HOSE. Is everything ready for this great event?

YELLOW HOSE. Everything. The fire blazing in the stove, the Pages, dressed in their best, waiting in the pantry with their various jars full of the finest butter, the sweetest sugar, the hottest pepper, the richest milk, the —

BLUE HOSE Yes, yes, no doubt. (*Thoughtfully*) It is a great responsibility, this that they have put on our shoulders.

YELLOW HOSE Ah, yes I have never felt more important

BLUE HOSE. Nor I more uncomfortable.

YELLOW HOSE Even on the day, or rather the night, when I awoke and found myself famous — I refer to the time when I laid before an astonished world my creation, "Humming birds' hearts soufflé, au vin blanc" — I did not feel more important. It is a pleasing sensation!

BLUE HOSE. I like it not at all. It makes me dizzy, this eminence on which they have placed us. The Lady Violetta is slim and fair. She does not, in my opinion, look like the kind of person who is capable of making good pastry. I have discovered through long experience that it is the heaviest women who make the lightest pastry, and *vice versa*. Well, then, suppose that she does not pass this examination — suppose that her pastry is lumpy, white like the skin of a boiled fowl.

YELLOW HOSE. Then, according to the law of the Kingdom of Hearts, we must condemn it, and the Lady Violetta cannot become the bride of Pompdeibile. Back to her native land she will be sent, riding a mule.

BLUE HOSE. And she is so pretty, so exquisite! What a law! What an outrageous law!

YELLOW HOSE. Outrageous law! How dare you! There is nothing so necessary to the welfare of the nation as our art. Good cooks make good tempers, don't they? Must not the queen set an example for the other women to follow? Did not our fathers and our grandfathers before us judge the dishes of the previous queens of hearts?

BLUE HOSE. I wish I were mixing the rolls for to-morrow's breakfast.

YELLOW HOSE. Bah! You are fit for nothing else. The affairs of state are beyond you.

(*Distant sound of trumpets.*)

BLUE HOSE (*nervously*). What's that?

YELLOW HOSE. The King is approaching! The ceremonies are about to commence!

BLUE HOSE. Is everything ready?

YELLOW HOSE. I told you that everything was ready. Stand still; you are as white as a stalk of celery.

BLUE HOSE (*counting on his fingers*). Apples, lemons, peaches, jam — Jam! Did you forget jam?

YELLOW HOSE. Zounds, I did!

BLUE HOSE (*wailing*). We are lost!

YELLOW HOSE. She may not call for it.

(*Both stand very erect and make a desperate effort to appear calm.*)

BLUE HOSE (*very nervous*). Which door? Which door?

YELLOW HOSE. The big one, idiot. Be still!

(*The sound of trumpets increases, and cries of "Make way for the King."* Two HERALDS come in and stand

on either side of the door. The KING OF HEARTS enters, followed by ladies and gentlemen of the court. POMPDEBILE is in full regalia, and very imposing indeed with his red robe bordered with ermine, his crown and sceptre. After him comes the CHANCELLOR, an old man with a short, white beard. The KING strides in a particularly kingly fashion, pointing his toes in the air at every step, toward his throne, and sits down. The KNAVE walks behind him slowly. He has a sharp, pale face)

POMPDEBILE (*impressively*). Lords and ladies of the court, this is an important moment in the history of our reign. The Lady Violetta, whom you love and respect — that is, I mean to say, whom the ladies love and the lords — er — respect, is about to prove whether or not she be fitted to hold the exalted position of Queen of Hearts, according to the law, made a thousand years ago by Pompdebole the Great, and steadily followed ever since. She will prepare with her own delicate, white hands a dish of pastry. This will be judged by the two finest pastry cooks in the land.

(*BLUE HOSE and YELLOW HOSE bow deeply.*)

If their verdict be favorable, she shall ride through the streets of the city on a white palfrey, garlanded with flowers. She will be crowned, the populace will cheer her, and she will reign by our side, attending to the domestic affairs of the realm, while we give our time to weightier matters. This of course you all understand is a time of great anxiety for the Lady Violetta. She will appear worried — (*To CHANCELLOR*) The palfrey is in readiness, we suppose.

CHANCELLOR. It is, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. Garlanded with flowers?

CHANCELLOR. With roses, Your Majesty.

KNAVE (*bowing*). The Lady Violetta prefers violets, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. Let there be a few violets put in with the roses — er — We are ready for the ceremony to commence. We confess to a slight nervousness unbecoming to one of our station. The Lady Violetta, though trying at times, we have found — er — shall we say — er — satisfying?

KNAVE (*bowing*). Intoxicating, Your Majesty?

CHANCELLOR (*shortly*). His Majesty means nothing of the sort.

POMPDEBILE. No, of course not — er — The mule — Is that — did you — ?

CHANCELLOR (*in a grieved tone*). This is hardly necessary. Have I ever neglected or forgotten any of your commands, Your Majesty?

POMPDEBILE. You have, often. However, don't be insulted. It takes a great deal of our time and it is most uninteresting.

CHANCELLOR (*indignantly*). I resign, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. Your thirty-seventh resignation will be accepted to-morrow. Just now it is our wish to begin at once. The anxiety that no doubt gathered in the breast of each of the seven successive Pompdebiles before us seems to have concentrated in ours. Already the people are clamoring at the gates of the palace to know the decision. Begin. Let the Pages be summoned.

KNAVE. (*bowing*). Beg pardon, Your Majesty, before summoning the Pages, should not the Lady Violetta be here?

POMPDEBILE. She should, and is, we presume, on the other side of that door — waiting breathlessly.

(THE KNAVE *quietly opens the door and closes it*.)

KNAVE (*bowing*). She is not, Your Majesty, on the other side of that door waiting breathlessly. In fact, to speak plainly, she is not on the other side of that door at all.

POMPDEBILE. Can that be true? Where are her ladies?

KNAVE. They are all there, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. Summon one of them.

(*THE KNAVE goes out, shutting the door. He returns, following URSULA, who, very much frightened, throws herself at the KING's feet.*)

POMPDEBILE. Where is your mistress?

URSULA. She has gone, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. Gone! Where has she gone?

URSULA. I do not know, Your Majesty. She was with us a while ago, waiting there, as you commanded.

POMPDEBILE. Yes, and then — speak.

URSULA. Then she started out and forbade us to go with her.

POMPDEBILE. The thought of possible divorce from us was more than she could bear. Did she say anything before she left?

URSULA (*trembling*). Yes, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE What was it? She may have gone to self-destruction. What was it?

URSULA. She said —

POMPDEBILE Speak, woman, speak.

URSULA. She said that Your Majesty —

POMPDEBILE. A farewell message! Go on.

URSULA (*gasping*). That Your Majesty was "pokey" and that she did n't intend to stay there any longer.

POMPDEBILE (*roaring*). *Pokey!!*

URSULA. Yes, Your Majesty, and she bade me call her when you came, but we can't find her, Your Majesty.

(*The PASTRY COOKS whisper. URSULA is in tears.*)

CHANCELLOR This should not be countenanced, Your Majesty. The word "pokey" cannot be found in the dictionary. It is the most flagrant disrespect to use a word that is not in the dictionary in connection with a king.

POMPDEBILE. We are quite aware of that, Chancellor, and although we may appear calm on the surface, inwardly we are swelling, swelling, with rage and indignation.

KNAVE (*looking out the window*). I see the Lady Violetta in the garden. (*He goes to the door and holds it open, bowing.*) The Lady Violetta is at the door, Your Majesty.

(Enter the LADY VIOLETTA, her purple train over her arm. She has been running.)

VIOLETTA. Am I late? I just remembered and came as fast as I could. I bumped into a sentry and he fell down. I did n't. That's strange, is n't it? I suppose it's because he stands in one position so long he — Why, Pompy dear, what's the matter? Oh, oh! (*Walking closer*) Your feelings are hurt!

POMPDEBILE. *Don't* call us Pompy. It does n't seem to matter to you whether you are divorced or not.

VIOLETTA (*anxiously*). Is that why your feelings are hurt?

POMPDEBILE. Our feelings are not hurt, not at all.

VIOLETTA. Oh, yes, they are, Pompdebile dear. I know, because they are connected with your eyebrows. When your feelings go down, up go your eyebrows, and when your feelings go up, they go down — always.

POMPDEBILE (*severely*). Where have you been?

VIOLETTA. I, just now?

POMPDEBILE. Just now, when you should have been outside that door waiting breathlessly.

VIOLETTA. I was in the garden. Really, Pompy, you could n't expect me to stay all day in that ridiculous pantry; and as for being breathless, it's quite impossible to be it unless one has been jumping or something.

POMPDEBILE. What were you doing in the garden?

VIOLETTA (*laughing*). Oh, it was too funny. I must tell you. I found a goat there who had a beard just like the

Chancellor's — really it was quite remarkable, the resemblance — in other ways too. I took him by the horns and I looked deep into his eyes, and I said, "Chancellor, if you try to influence Pompy —"

POMPDEBILE (*shouting*) Don't call us Pompy.

VIOLETTA Excuse me, Pomp —

(*Checking herself*)

KNAVE. And yet I think I remember hearing of an emperor, a great emperor, named Pompey.

POMPDEBILE. We know him not. Begin at once; the people are clamoring at the gates Bring the ingredients.

(*The PASTRY COOKS open the door, and, single file, six little boys march in, bearing large jars labeled butter, salt, flour, pepper, cinnamon, and milk. The COOKS place a table and a large bowl and a pan in front of the LADY VIOLETTA and give her a spoon. The six little boys stand three on each side*)

VIOLETTA. Oh, what darling little ingredients. May I have an apron, please?

(*URSULA puts a silk apron, embroidered with red hearts, on the LADY VIOLETTA.*)

BLUE HOSE. We were unable to find a little boy to carry the pepper, My Lady. They all *would* sneeze in such a disturbing way.

VIOLETTA This is a perfectly controlled little boy. He has n't sneezed once.

YELLOW HOSE That, if it please Your Ladyship, is not a little boy.

VIOLETTA Oh! How nice! Perhaps she will help me.

CHANCELLOR (*severely*). You are allowed no help, Lady Violetta.

VIOLETTA Oh, Chancellor, how cruel of you (*She takes up the spoon, bowing*) Your Majesty, Lords and Ladies of the court, I propose to make (*impressively*) raspberry tarts.

BLUE HOSE. Heaven be kind to us!

YELLOW HOSE (*suddenly agitated*). Your Majesty, I implore your forgiveness. There is no raspberry jam in the palace.

POMPDEBILE What! Who is responsible for this carelessness?

BLUE HOSE. I gave the order to the grocer, but it did n't come. (*Aside*) I knew something like this would happen. I knew it.

VIOLETTA (*untying her apron*). Then, Pompdebile, I 'm very sorry — we shall have to postpone it.

CHANCELLOR. If I may be allowed to suggest, Lady Violetta can prepare something else.

KNAVE. The law distinctly says that the Queen-elect has the privilege of choosing the dish which she prefers to prepare.

VIOLETTA. Dear Pompdebile, let's give it up. It's such a silly law! Why should a great splendid ruler like you follow it just because one of your ancestors, who was n't half as nice as you are, or one bit wiser, said to do it? Dearest Pompdebile, please.

POMPDEBILE. We are inclined to think that there may be something in what the Lady Violetta says.

CHANCELLOR. I can no longer remain silent. It is due to that brilliant law of Pompdebile the First, justly called the Great, that all members of our male sex are well fed, and, as a natural consequence, happy

KNAVE. The happiness of a set of moles who never knew the sunlight.

POMPDEBILE. If we made an effort, we could think of a new law — just as wise. It only requires effort

CHANCELLOR. But the constitution. We can't touch the constitution.

POMPDEBILE (*starting up*). We shall destroy the constitution!

CHANCELLOR. The people are clamoring at the gates!

POMPDEBILE. Oh, I forgot them. No, it has been carried too far. We shall have to go on. Proceed.

VIOLETTA. Without the raspberry jam?

POMPDEBILE (*to KNAVE*). Go you, and procure some. I will give a hundred golden guineas for it.

(*The little boy who holds the cinnamon pot comes forward.*)

BOY. Please, Your Majesty, I have some.

POMPDEBILE You! Where?

BOY. In my pocket. If someone would please hold my cinnamon jar — I could get it.

(URSULA *takes it. The boy struggles with his pocket and finally, triumphantly, pulls out a small jar.*)

There!

VIOLETTA. How clever of you! Do you always do that?

BOY. What — eat raspberry jam?

VIOLETTA. No, supply the exact article needed from your pocket.

BOY. I eat it for my lunch. Please give me the hundred guineas.

VIOLETTA. Oh, yes — Chancellor — if I may trouble you.

(*Holding out her hand.*)

CHANCELLOR Your Majesty, this is an outrage! Are you going to allow this?

POMPDEBILE (*sadly*). Yes, Chancellor. We have such an impulsive nature!

(*The LADY VIOLETTA receives the money.*)

VIOLETTA. Thank you. (*She gives it to the boy.*) Now we are ready to begin. Milk, please. (*The boy who holds the milk jar comes forward and kneels.*) I take some of this milk and beat it well.

YELLOW HOSE (*in a whisper*). Beat it — milk!

VIOLETTA. Then I put in two tablespoonfuls of salt, taking great care that it falls exactly in the middle of the bowl.

(*To the little boy*) Thank you, dear. Now the flour, no, the pepper, and then — one pound of butter. I hope that it is good butter, or the whole thing will be quite spoiled.

BLUE HOSE. This is the most astonishing thing I have ever witnessed.

YELLOW HOSE. I don't understand it.

VIOLETTA (*stirring*). I find that the butter is *not* very good. It makes a great difference. I shall have to use more pepper to counteract it. That's better. (*She pours in pepper. The boy with the pepper pot sneezes violently.*) Oh, oh, dear! Lend him your handkerchief, Chancellor. Knave, will you? (*YELLOW HOSE silences the boy's sneezes with the KNAVE's handkerchief.*) I think that they are going to turn out very well. Aren't you glad, Chancellor? You shall have one if you will be glad and smile nicely — a little brown tart with raspberry jam in the middle. Now for a dash of vinegar.

COOKS (*in horror*). Vinegar! Great Goslings! Vinegar!

VIOLETTA (*stops stirring*). Vinegar will make them crumbly. Do you like them crumbly, Pompdebile, darling? They are really for you, you know, since I am trying, by this example, to show all the wives how to please all the husbands.

POMPDEBILE. Remember that they are to go in the museum with the tests of the previous Queens.

VIOLETTA (*thoughtfully*). Oh, yes, I had forgotten that. Under the circumstances, I shall omit the vinegar. We don't want them too crumbly. They would fall about and catch the dust so frightfully. The museum-keeper would never forgive me in years to come. Now I dip them by the spoonful on this pan; fill them with the nice little boy's raspberry jam — I'm sorry I have to use it all, but you may lick the spoon — put them in the oven, slam the door. Now, my Lord Pompy, the fire will do the rest

(*She curtsies before the KING.*)

POMPDEBILE. It gave us great pleasure to see the ease with which you performed your task. You must have been practising for weeks. This relieves, somewhat, the anxiety under which we have been suffering and makes us think that we would enjoy a game of checkers once more. How long a time will it take for your creation to be thoroughly done, so that it may be tested?

VIOLETTA (*considering*). About twenty minutes, Pompy.

POMPDEBILE (*to HERALD*). Inform the people. Come, we will retire. (*To KNAVE*) Let no one enter until the Lady Violetta commands.

(*All exit, left, except the KNAVE. He stands in deep thought, his chin in hand — then exits slowly, right. The room is empty. The cuckoo clock strikes. Presently both right and left doors open stealthily. Enter LADY VIOLETTA at one door, the KNAVE at the other, backward, looking down the passage. They turn suddenly and see each other.*)

VIOLETTA (*tearfully*). O Knave, I can't cook! Anything — anything at all, not even a baked potato.

KNAVE. So I rather concluded, My Lady, a few minutes ago.

VIOLETTA (*pleadingly*). Don't you think it might just happen that they turned out all right? (*Whispering*) Take them out of the oven. Let's look.

KNAVE. That's what I intended to do before you came in. It's possible that a miracle has occurred.

(*He tries the door of the oven.*)

VIOLETTA. Look out; it's hot. Here, take my handkerchief.

KNAVE. The gods forbid, My Lady.

(*He takes his hat, and, folding it, opens the door and brings out the pan, which he puts on the table softly.*)

VIOLETTA (*with a look of horror*). How queer! They've

melted or something. See, they are quite soft and runny. Do you think that they will be good for anything, Knave?

KNAVE. For paste, My Lady, perhaps.

VIOLETTA. Oh, dear. Is n't it dreadful!

KNAVE. It is.

VIOLETTA (*beginning to cry*). I don't want to be banished, especially on a mule —

KNAVE. Don't cry, My Lady. It's very — upsetting.

VIOLETTA. I would make a delightful queen. The fêtes that I would give — under the starlight, with soft music stealing from the shadows, fêtes all perfume and deep mystery, where the young — like you and me, Knave — would find the glowing flowers of youth ready to be gathered in all their dewy freshness!

KNAVE Ah!

VIOLETTA. Those stupid tarts! And would n't I make a pretty picture riding on the white palfrey, garlanded with flowers, followed by the cheers of the populace — Long live Queen Violetta, long live Queen Violetta! Those *abominable* tarts!

KNAVE. I'm afraid that Her Ladyship is vain.

VIOLETTA. I am indeed. Is n't it fortunate?

KNAVE. Fortunate?

VIOLETTA. Well, I mean it would be fortunate if I were going to be queen. They get so much flattery. The queens who don't adore it as I do must be bored to death. Poor things! I'm never so happy as when I am being flattered. It makes me feel all warm and purry. That is another reason why I feel sure I was *made* to be a queen.

KNAVE (*looking ruefully at the pan*). You will never be queen, My Lady, unless we can think of something quickly, some plan —

VIOLETTA. Oh, yes, dear Knave, please think of a plan at once. Banished people, I suppose, have to comb their own

hair, put on their shoes, and button themselves up the back. I have never performed these estimable and worthy tasks, Knave. I don't know how; I don't even know how to scent my bath. I have n't the least idea what makes it smell deliciously of violets. I only know that it always *does* smell deliciously of violets because I wish it that way. I should be miserable; save me, Knave, please.

KNAVE. My mind is unhappily a blank, Your Majesty.

VIOLETTA. It's very unjust. Indeed, it's unjust! No other queen in the world has to understand cooking; even the Queen of Spades does n't. Why should the Queen of Hearts, of all people!

KNAVE. Perhaps it is because — I have heard a proverb: "The way to the heart is through the —"

VIOLETTA (*angrily, stamping her foot*). Don't repeat that hateful proverb! Nothing can make me more angry. I feel like crying when I hear it, too. Now see, I'm crying. You made me.

KNAVE. Why does that proverb make you cry, My Lady?

VIOLETTA. Oh, because it is such a stupid proverb and so silly, because it's true in most cases, and because — I don't know why.

KNAVE. We are a set of moles here. One might also say that we are a set of mules. How can moles or mules either be expected to understand the point of view of a Bird of Paradise when she —

VIOLETTA. Bird of Paradise! Do you mean me?

KNAVE (*bowing*). I do, My Lady, figuratively speaking.

VIOLETTA (*drying her eyes*). How very pretty of you! Do you know, I think that you would make a splendid chancellor.

KNAVE Her Ladyship is vain, as I remarked before.

VIOLETTA (*coldly*). As I remarked before, how fortunate. Have you anything to suggest — a plan?

KNAVE. If only there were time my wife could teach you. Her figure is squat, round, her nose is clumsy, and her eyes stumble over it; but her cooking, ah — (*He blows a kiss*) it is a thing to dream about. She cooks as naturally as the angels sing. The delicate flavors of her concoctions float over the palate like the perfumes of a thousand flowers. True, her temper, it is anything but sweet — However, I am conceded by many to be the most happily married man in the kingdom.

VIOLETTA (*sadly*). Yes. That's all they care about here. One may be, oh, so cheerful and kind and nice in every other way, but if one can't cook nobody loves one at all.

KNAVE. Beasts! My higher nature cries out at them for holding such views. Fools! Swine! But my lower nature whispers that perhaps after all they are not far from right, and as my lower nature is the only one that ever gets any encouragement —

VIOLETTA. Then you think that there is nothing to be done — I shall have to be banished?

KNAVE. I'm afraid — Wait, I have an idea! (*Excitedly*) Dulcinea, my wife — her name is Dulcinea — made known to me this morning, very forcibly — Yes, I remember, I'm sure — Yes, she was going to bake this very morning some raspberry tarts — a dish in which she particularly excels — If I could only procure some of them and bring them here!

VIOLETTA. Oh, Knave, dearest, sweetest Knave, could you, I mean, would you? Is there time? The court will return.

(*They tiptoe to the door and listen stealthily.*)

KNAVE. I shall run as fast as I can. Don't let anyone come in until I get back, if you can help it.

(*He jumps on the table, ready to go out the window.*)

VIOLETTA. Oh, Knave, how clever of you to think of it.

It is the custom for the King to grant a boon to the Queen at her coronation. I shall ask that you be made Chancellor.

KNAVE (*turning back*). Oh, please don't, My Lady, I implore you.

VIOLETTA. Why not?

KNAVE. It would give me social position, My Lady, and that I would rather die than possess. Oh, how we argue about that, my wife and I! Dulcinea wishes to climb, and the higher she climbs, the less she cooks. Should you have me made Chancellor, she would never wield a spoon again.

VIOLETTA (*pursing her lips*). But it does n't seem fair, exactly. Think of how much I shall be indebted to her. If she enjoys social position, I might as well give her some. We have lots and lots of it lying around.

KNAVE. She would n't, My Lady, she would n't enjoy it. Dulcinea is a true genius, you understand, and the happiness of a genius lies solely in using his gift. If she did n't cook she would be miserable, although she might not be aware of it, I'm perfectly sure.

VIOLETTA Then I shall take all social position away from you. You shall rank below the scullery maids. Do you like that better? Hurry, please.

KNAVE. Thank you, My Lady; it will suit me perfectly.

(*He goes out with the tarts. VIOLETTA listens anxiously for a minute; then she takes her skirt between the tips of her fingers and practises in pantomime her anticipated ride on the palfrey. She bows, smiles, kisses her hand, until suddenly she remembers the mule standing outside the gates of the palace. That thought saddens her, so she curls up in POMPDEBILE's throne and cries softly, wiping away her tears with a lace handkerchief. There is a knock. She flies to the door and holds it shut.*)

VIOLETTA (*breathlessly*). Who is there?

CHANCELLOR. It is I, Lady Violetta. The King wishes to return.

VIOLETTA (*alarmed*). Return! Does he? But the tarts are not done. They are not done at all!

CHANCELLOR. You said they would be ready in twenty minutes. His Majesty is impatient.

VIOLETTA. Did you play a game of checkers with him, Chancellor?

CHANCELLOR. Yes.

VIOLETTA. And did you beat him?

CHANCELLOR (*shortly*). I did not.

VIOLETTA (*laughing*). How sweet of you! Would you mind doing it again just for me? Or would it be too great a strain on you to keep from beating him twice in succession?

CHANCELLOR. I shall tell the King that you refuse admission.

(VIOLETTA runs to the window to see if the KNAVE is in sight. The CHANCELLOR returns and knocks.)

CHANCELLOR. The King wishes to come in.

VIOLETTA. But the checkers!

CHANCELLOR. The Knights of the Checker Board have taken them away.

VIOLETTA. But the tarts are n't done, really.

CHANCELLOR. You said twenty minutes.

VIOLETTA. No, I did n't — at least, I said twenty minutes for them to get good and warm and another twenty minutes for them to become brown. That makes forty — don't you remember?

CHANCELLOR. I shall carry your message to His Majesty.

(VIOLETTA again runs to the window and peers anxiously up the road.)

CHANCELLOR (*knocking loudly*). The King commands you to open the door.

VIOLETTA. Commands! Tell him — Is he there — with you?

CHANCELLOR His Majesty is at the door.

VIOLETTA. Pompy, I think you are rude, very rude indeed. I don't see how you can be so rude — to command me, your own Violetta who loves you so. (*She again looks in vain for the KNAVE.*) Oh, dear! (*Wringing her hands*) Where *can* he be!

POMPDEBILE (*outside*). This is nonsense. Don't you see how worried we are? It is a compliment to you —

VIOLETTA. Well, come in; I don't care — only I'm sure they are not finished.

(*She opens the door for the KING, the CHANCELLOR, and the two PASTRY COOKS. The KING walks to his throne. He finds LADY VIOLETTA's lace handkerchief on it.*)

POMPDEBILE (*holding up handkerchief*). What is this?

VIOLETTA. Oh, that's my handkerchief.

POMPDEBILE. It is very damp. Can it be that you are anxious, that you are afraid?

VIOLETTA. How silly, Pompy. I washed my hands, as one always does after cooking; (*to the PASTRY COOKS*) does n't one? But there was no towel, so I used my handkerchief instead of my petticoat, which is made of chiffon and is very perishable.

CHANCELLOR. Is the Lady Violetta ready to produce her work?

VIOLETTA. I don't understand what you mean by work, Chancellor. Oh, the tarts! (*Nervously*) They were quite simple — quite simple to make — no work at all — A little imagination is all one needs for such things, just imagination. You agree with me, don't you, Pompy, that imagination will work wonders — will do almost anything, in fact? I remember —

POMPDEBILE. The Pastry Cooks will remove the tarts from the oven.

VIOLETTA. Oh, *no*, Pompy! They are not finished or cooked, or whatever one calls it. They are not. The last five minutes is of the greatest importance. Please don't let them touch them! *Please —*

POMPDEBILE. There, there, my dear Violetta, calm yourself. If you wish, they will put them back again. There can be no harm in looking at them. Come, I will hold your hand.

VIOLETTA. That will help a great deal, Pompy, your holding my hand.

(*She scrambles up on the throne beside the KING.*)

CHANCELLOR (*in horror*). On the throne, Your Majesty?

POMPDEBILE. Of course not, Chancellor. We regret that you are not yet entitled to sit on the throne, my dear. In a little while —

VIOLETTA (*coming down*). Oh, I see. May I sit here, Chancellor, in this seemingly humble position at his feet? Of course, I can't *really* be humble when he is holding my hand and enjoying it so much.

POMPDEBILE. Violetta! (*To the PASTRY COOKS*) Sample the tarts. This suspense is unbearable!

(*The KING's voice is husky with excitement. The two PASTRY COOKS, after bowing with great ceremony to the KING, to each other, to the CHANCELLOR — for this is the most important moment of their lives by far — walk to the oven door and open it, impressively. They fall back in astonishment so great that they lose their balance, but they quickly scramble to their feet again.*)

YELLOW HOSE. Your Majesty, there are no tarts there!

BLUE HOSE. Your Majesty, the tarts have gone!

VIOLETTA (*clasping her hands*). Gone! Oh, where could they have gone?

POMPDEBILE (*coming down from throne*). That is impossible.

PASTRY COOKS (*greatly excited*). You see, you see, the oven is empty as a drum.

POMPDEBILE (*to VIOLETTA*) Did you go out of this room?

VIOLETTA (*wailing*). Only for a few minutes, Pompy, to powder my nose before the mirror in the pantry. (*To PASTRY COOKS*) When one cooks one becomes so disheveled, does n't one? But if I had thought for one little minute —

POMPDEBILE (*interrupting*). The tarts have been stolen!

VIOLETTA (*with a shriek, throwing herself on a chair*). Stolen! Oh, I shall faint; help me. Oh, oh, to think that any one would take my delicious little, my dear little tarts. My salts. Oh! Oh!

(PASTRY COOKS *run to the door and call*.)

YELLOW HOSE. Salts! Bring the Lady Violetta's salts.

BLUE HOSE. The Lady Violetta has fainted!

(URSULA *enters hurriedly bearing a smelling-bottle*)

URSULA. Here, here — What has happened? Oh, My Lady, my sweet mistress!

POMPDEBILE. Some wretch has stolen the tarts.

(LADY VIOLETTA *moans*.)

URSULA. Bring some water. I will take off her headdress and bathe her forehead.

VIOLETTA (*sitting up*). I feel better now. Where am I? What is the matter? I remember. Oh, my poor tarts!

(She buries her face in her hands.)

CHANCELLOR (*suspiciously*). Your Majesty, this is very strange.

URSULA (*excitedly*). I know, Your Majesty. It was the Knave. One of the Queen's women, who was walking in the garden, saw the Knave jump out of this window with a tray in his hand. It was the Knave.

VIOLETTA. Oh, I don't think it was he. I don't, really.

POMPDEBILE. The scoundrel. Of course it was he. We shall banish him for this or have him *beheaded*

CHANCELLOR. It should have been done long ago, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. You are right.

CHANCELLOR. Your Majesty will never listen to me.

POMPDEBILE. We *do* listen to you. Be quiet.

VIOLETTA. What are you going to do, Pompy, dear?

POMPDEBILE. Herald, issue a proclamation at once. Let it be known all over the Kingdom that I desire that the Knave be brought here dead or alive. Send the royal detectives and policemen in every direction.

CHANCELLOR. Excellent; just what I should have advised had Your Majesty listened to me.

POMPDEBILE (*in a rage*). Be quiet. (*Exit HERALD.*) I never have a brilliant thought but you claim it. It is insufferable!

(*The HERALDS can be heard in the distance.*)

CHANCELLOR. I resign.

POMPDEBILE. Good. We accept your thirty-eighth resignation at once

CHANCELLOR. You did me the honor to appoint me as your Chancellor, Your Majesty, yet never, never do you give me an opportunity to chancel. That is my only grievance. You must admit, Your Majesty, that as your advisers advise you, as your dressers dress you, as your hunters hunt, as your bakers bake, your Chancellor should be allowed to chancel. However, I will be just — as I have been with you so long; before I leave you, I will give you a month's notice.

POMPDEBILE. That is n't necessary.

CHANCELLOR (*referring to the constitution hanging at his belt*). It's in the constitution.

POMPDEBILE Be quiet.

VIOLETTA. Well, I think as things have turned out so — so unfortunately, I shall change my gown. (*To URSULA*) Put out my cloth of silver with the moonstones. It is always a relief to change one's gown. May I have my handkerchief, Pompy? Rather a pretty one, is n't it, Pompy? Of course you don't object to my calling you Pompy now. When I'm in trouble it's a comfort, like holding your hand.

POMPDEBILE (*magnanimously*). You may hold our hand too, Violetta.

VIOLETTA (*fervently*). Oh, how good you are, how sympathetic! But you see it's impossible just now, as I have to change my gown — unless you will come with me while I change.

CHANCELLOR (*in a voice charged with inexpressible horror*). Your Majesty!

POMPDEBILE. Be quiet! You have been discharged!

(He starts to descend, when a HERALD bursts through the door in a state of great excitement. He kneels before POMPDEBILE.)

HERALD. We have found him; we have found him, Your Majesty. In fact, I found him all by myself! He was sitting under the shrubbery eating a tart. I stumbled over one of his legs and fell. "How easy it is to send man and all his pride into the dust," he said, and then — I saw him!

POMPDEBILE. Eating a tart! Eating a tart, did you say? The scoundrel! Bring him here immediately.

(The HERALD rushes out and returns with the KNAVE, followed by the six little PAGES. The KNAVE carries a tray of tarts in his hand.)

POMPDEBILE (*almost speechless with rage*). How dare you — you — you —

KNAVE (*bowing*). Knave, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE You Knave, you shall be punished for this.

CHANCELLOR. Behead him, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. Yes, behead him at once.

VIOLETTA. Oh, no, Pompy, not that! It is not severe enough.

POMPDEBILE. Not severe enough, to cut off a man's head! Really, Violetta —

VIOLETTA. No, because, you see, when one has been beheaded, one's consciousness that one has been beheaded comes off too. It is inevitable. And then, what does it matter, when one does n't know? Let us think of something really cruel — really fiendish. I have it — deprive him of social position for the rest of his life — force him to remain a mere knave, forever.

POMPDEBILE. You are right.

KNAVE. Terrible as this punishment is, I admit that I deserve it, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. What prompted you to commit this dastardly crime?

KNAVE. All my life I have had a craving for tarts of any kind. There is something in my nature that demands tarts — something in my constitution that cries out for them — and I obey my constitution as rigidly as does the Chancellor seek to obey his. I was in the garden reading, as is my habit, when a delicate odor floated to my nostrils, a persuasive odor, a seductive, light brown, flaky odor, an odor so enticing, so suggestive of tarts fit for the *gods* — that I could stand it no longer. It was stronger than I. With one gesture I threw reputation, my chances for future happiness, to the winds, and leaped through the window. The odor led me to the oven; I seized a tart, and, eating it, experienced the one perfect moment of my existence. After having eaten that one tart, my craving for other

tarts has disappeared. I shall live with the memory of that first tart before me forever, or die content, having tasted true perfection.

POMPDEBILE. M-m-m, how extraordinary! Let him be beaten fifteen strokes on the back. Now, Pastry Cooks to the Royal Household, we await your decision!

(*The Cooks bow as before; then each selects a tart from the tray on the table, lifts it high, then puts it in his mouth. An expression of absolute ecstasy and beatitude comes over their faces. They clasp hands, then fall on each other's necks, weeping.*)

POMPDEBILE (*impatiently*). What on earth is the matter?

YELLOW HOSE. Excuse our emotion. It is because we have at last encountered a true genius, a great master, or rather mistress, of our art.

(*They bow to VIOLETTA.*)

POMPDEBILE. They are good, then?

BLUE HOSE (*his eyes to heaven*). Good! They are angelic!

POMPDEBILE. Give one of the tarts to us. We would sample it.

(*The PASTRY COOKS hand the tray to the KING, who selects a tart and eats it.*)

POMPDEBILE (*to VIOLETTA*). My dear, they are marvels! marvels! (*He comes down from the throne and leads VIOLETTA up to the dais.*) Your throne, my dear.

VIOLETTA (*sitting down, with a sigh*). I'm glad it's such a comfortable one.

POMPDEBILE. Knave, we forgive your offense. The temptation was very great. There are things that mere human nature cannot be expected to resist. Another tart, Cooks, and yet another!

CHANCELLOR. But, Your Majesty, don't eat them all. They must go to the museum with the dishes of the previous Queens of Hearts.

YELLOW HOSE. A museum — those tarts! As well lock a rose in a money-box!

CHANCELLOR. But the constitution commands it. How else can we commemorate, for future generations, this event?

KNAVE. An Your Majesty, please, I will commemorate it in a rhyme.

POMPDEBILE. How can a mere rhyme serve to keep this affair in the minds of the people?

KNAVE. It is the *only* way to keep it in the minds of the people. No event is truly deathless unless its monument be built in rhyme. Consider that fall which, though insignificant in itself, became the most famous of all history, because someone happened to put it into rhyme. The crash of it sounded through centuries and will vibrate for generations to come.

VIOLETTA. You mean the fall of the Holy Roman Empire?

KNAVE. No, Madam, I refer to the fall of Humpty Dumpty.

POMPDEBILE. Well, make your rhyme. In the meantime let us celebrate. You may all have one tart. (*The Pastry Cooks pass the tarts. To VIOLETTA*) Are you willing, dear, to ride the white palfrey garlanded with flowers through the streets of the city?

VIOLETTA. Willing! I have been practising for days!

POMPDEBILE. The people, I suppose, are still clamoring at the gates.

VIOLETTA. Oh, yes, they must clamor. I *want* them to. Herald, tell them that to every man I shall toss a flower, to every woman a shining gold piece, but to the babies I shall throw only kisses, thousands of them, like little winged birds. Kisses and gold and roses! They will surely love me then!

CHANCELLOR. Your Majesty, I protest. Of what possible use to the people — ?

POMPDEBILE. Be quiet. The Queen may scatter what she pleases.

KNAVE. My rhyme is ready, Your Majesty.

POMPDEBILE. Repeat it.

KNAVE.

The Queen of Hearts
She made some tarts
All on a summer's day.
The Knave of Hearts
He stole those tarts
And took them quite away.

The King of Hearts
Called for those tarts
And beat the Knave full sore.
The Knave of Hearts
Brought back the tarts
And vowed he'd sin no more

VIOLETTA (*earnestly*). My dear Knave, how wonderful of you! You shall be Poet Laureate. A Poet Laureate has no social position, has he?

KNAVE. It depends, Your Majesty, upon whether or not he chooses to be more laureate than poet.

VIOLETTA (*rising, her eyes closed in ecstasy*). *Your Majesty!* Those words go to my head — like wine!

KNAVE. Long live Pompdebole the Eighth, and Queen Violetta! *(The trumpets sound.)*

HERALDS. Make way for Pompdebole the Eighth, and Queen *Vee-oletta*!

VIOLETTA (*excitedly*). *Vee-oletta, please!*

HERALDS. Make way for Pompdebole the Eighth, and Queen *Vee-oletta* —

(The KING and QUEEN show themselves at the door — and the people can be heard clamoring outside.)

FAME AND THE POET¹

LORD DUNSANY

SCENE: The Poet's rooms in London. Windows in back.

A high screen in a corner.

TIME February 30th.

CHARACTERS

HARRY DE REVES — A Poet.

(*This name, though of course of French origin, has become anglicized and is pronounced DE REEVES*)

DICK PRATTLE. — A Lieutenant-Major of the Royal Horse Marines.

FAME.

(*The Poet is sitting at a table, writing. Enter DICK PRATTLE*)

PRATTLE. Hullo, Harry.

DE REVES. Hullo, Dick Good Lord, where are you from?

PRATTLE (*casually*). The ends of the Earth.

DE REVES. Well, I'm damned!

PRATTLE. Thought I'd drop in and see how you were getting on.

DE REVES. Well, that's splendid. What are you doing in London?

PRATTLE. Well, I wanted to see if I could get one or two

¹ Reprinted from the *Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1919, by special permission of Lord Dunsany and the editors of the *Atlantic Monthly*.

decent ties to wear, — you can get nothing out there, — then I thought I'd have a look and see how London was getting on.

DE REVES. Splendid! How's everybody?

PRATTLE. All going strong.

DE REVES. That's good.

PRATTLE (*seeing paper and ink*). But what are you doing?

DE REVES Writing

PRATTLE Writing? I did n't know you wrote.

DE REVES Yes, I've taken to it rather.

PRATTLE. I say — writing's no good. What do you write?

DE REVES. Oh, poetry.

PRATTLE. Poetry? Good Lord'

DE REVES. Yes, that sort of thing, you know.

PRATTLE Good Lord' Do you make any money by it?

DE REVES. No. Hardly any

PRATTLE. I say — why don't you chuck it?

DE REVES. Oh, I don't know. Some people seem to like my stuff, rather. That's why I go on.

PRATTLE. I'd chuck it if there's no money in it.

DE REVES Ah, but then it's hardly in your line, is it? You'd hardly approve of poetry if there *was* money in it.

PRATTLE. Oh, I don't say that If I could make as much by poetry as I can by betting I don't say I would n't try the poetry touch, only —

DE REVES. Only what?

PRATTLE. Oh, I don't know. Only there seems more sense in betting, somehow.

DE REVES. Well, yes I suppose it's easier to tell what an earthly horse is going to do, than to tell what Pegasus —

PRATTLE. What's Pegasus?

DE REVES. Oh, the winged horse of poets.

PRATTLE. I say! You don't believe in a winged horse, do you?

DE REVES. In our trade we believe in all fabulous things. They all represent some large truth to turn us. An emblem like Pegasus is as real a thing to a poet as a Derby winner would be to you.

PRATTLE. I say. (Give me a cigarette. Thanks.) What? Then you'd believe in nymphs and fauns, and Pan, and all those kind of birds?

DE REVES. Yes. Yes. In all of them.

PRATTLE. Good Lord!

DE REVES. You believe in the Lord Mayor of London, don't you?

PRATTLE. Yes, of course; but what has —

DE REVES. Four million people or so made him Lord Mayor, did n't they? And he represents to them the wealth and dignity and tradition of —

PRATTLE. Yes; but, I say, what has all this —

DE REVES. Well, he stands for an idea to them, and they made him Lord Mayor, and so he is one. . . .

PRATTLE. Well, of course he is.

DE REVES. In the same way Pan has been made what he is by millions; by millions to whom he represents world-old traditions.

PRATTLE (*rising from his chair and stepping backwards, laughing and looking at the Poet in a kind of assumed wonder*). I say . . . I say . . . You old heathen . . . but Good Lord . . .

(*He bumps into the high screen behind, pushing it back a little.*)

DE REVES. Look out! Look out!

PRATTLE. What? What's the matter?

DE REVES. The screen!

PRATTLE. Oh, sorry, yes. I'll put it right.

(*He is about to go round behind it.*)

DE REVES. No, don't go round there.

PRATTLE. What? Why not?

DE REVES. Oh, you would n't understand.

PRATTLE. Would n't understand? Why, what have you got?

DE REVES. Oh, one of those things . . . You would n't understand.

PRATTLE. Of course I'd understand. Let's have a look.

(*The Poet walks toward Prattle and the screen. He protests no further. Prattle looks round the corner of the screen.*) An altar.

DE REVES (*removing the screen altogether*). That is all. What do you make of it?

(*An altar of Greek design, shaped like a pedestal, is revealed. Papers litter the floor all about it.*)

PRATTLE. I say — you always were an untidy devil.

DE REVES. Well, what do you make of it?

PRATTLE. It reminds me of your room at Eton.

DE REVES. My room at Eton?

PRATTLE. Yes, you always had papers all over your floor.

DE REVES. Oh, yes —

PRATTLE. And what are these?

DE REVES. All these are poems; and this is my altar to Fame.

PRATTLE. To Fame?

DE REVES. The same that Homer knew.

PRATTLE. Good Lord!

DE REVES. Keats never saw her. Shelley died too young. She came late at the best of times, now scarcely ever.

PRATTLE. But, my dear fellow, you don't mean that you think there really is such a person?

DE REVES. I offer all my songs to her.

PRATTLE. But you don't mean you think you could actually *see* Fame?

DE REVES. We poets personify abstract things, and not poets only but sculptors and painters too. All the great things of the world are those abstract things.

PRATTLE. But what I mean is they're not really there, like you or me.

DE REVES. To us these things are more real than men, they outlive generations, they watch the passing of Kingdoms: we go by them like dust; they are still here, unmoved, unsmiling.

PRATTLE. But, but, you can't think that you could *see* Fame, you don't expect to *see* it.

DE REVES. Not to me. Never to me. She of the golden trumpet and Greek dress will never appear to me. . . . We all have our dreams.

PRATTLE. I say — what have you been doing all day?

DE REVES. If? Oh, only writing a sonnet.

PRATTLE. Is it a long one?

DE REVES. Not very.

PRATTLE. About how long is it?

DE REVES. About fourteen lines.

PRATTLE (*impressively*). I tell you what it is.

DE REVES. Yes?

PRATTLE. I tell you what You've been overworking yourself. I once got like that on board the Sandhurst, working for the passing-out exam. I got so bad that I could have seen anything.

DE REVES. Seen anything?

PRATTLE. Lord, yes: horned pigs, snakes with wings, anything, one of your winged horses even. They gave me some stuff called bromide for it. You take a rest

DE REVES. But my dear fellow, you don't understand at all I merely said that abstract things are to a poet as near and real and visible as one of your bookmakers or barmaids.

PRATTLE I know. You take a rest.

DE REVES. Well, perhaps I will. I'd come with you to that musical comedy you're going to see, only I'm a bit tired after writing this; it's a tedious job I'll come another night.

PRATTLE. How do you know I'm going to see a musical comedy?

DE REVES. Well, where would you go? *Hamlet's* on at the Lord Chamberlain's. You're not going there.

PRATTLE. Do I look like it?

DE REVES. No

PRATTLE Well, you're quite right. I'm going to see "The Girl from Bedlam." So long I must push off now. It's getting late. You take a rest. Don't add another line to that sonnet, fourteen's quite enough. You take a rest. Don't have any dinner to-night, just rest. I was like that once myself. So long

DE REVES So long.

(*Exit PRATTLE. DE REVES returns to his table and sits down*)

Good old Dick. He's the same as ever. Lord, how time passes.

(*He takes his pen and his sonnet and makes a few alterations.*)

Well, that's finished. I can't do any more to it.

(*He rises and goes to the screen; he draws back part of it and goes up to the altar. He is about to place his sonnet reverently at the foot of the altar amongst his other verses.*)

No, I will not put it there. This one is worthy of the altar.

(*He places the sonnet upon the altar itself.*)

If that sonnet does not give me Fame, nothing that I have done before will give it to me, nothing that I ever will do.

(*He replaces the screen and returns to his chair at the table. Twilight is coming on. He sits with his elbow on*

the table, his head on his hand, or however the actor pleases.)

Well, well. Fancy seeing Dick again. Well, Dick enjoys his life, so he's no fool. What was that he said? "There's no money in poetry. You'd better chuck it." Ten years' work and what have I to show for it? The admiration of men who care for poetry, and how many of *them* are there? There's a bigger demand for smoked glasses to look at eclipses of the sun. Why should Fame come to me? Have n't I given up my days for her? That is enough to keep her away. I am a poet; that is enough reason for her to slight me. Proud and aloof and cold as marble, what does Fame care for us? Yes, Dick is right. It's a poor game chasing illusions, hunting the intangible, pursuing dreams. Dreams? Why, we are ourselves dreams. (*He leans back in his chair.*)

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

(*He is silent for a while. Suddenly he lifts his head.*)
My room at Eton, Dick said An untidy mess.

(*As he lifts his head and says these words, twilight gives place to broad daylight, merely as a hint that the author of the play may have been mistaken, and the whole thing may have been no more than a poet's dream.*)

So it was, and it's an untidy mess there (*looking at screen*) too. Dick's right. I'll tidy it up. I'll burn the whole damned heap. (*He advances impetuously toward the screen.*) Every damned poem that I was ever fool enough to waste my time on.

(*He pushes back the screen. FAME in a Greek dress with a long golden trumpet in her hand is seen standing motionless on the altar like a marble goddess.*)

So . . . you have come!

(*For a while he stands thunderstruck. Then he approaches the altar.*)

Divine fair lady, you have come

(*He holds up his hands to her and leads her down from the altar and into the centre of the stage. At whatever moment the actor finds it most convenient, he repossesses himself of the sonnet that he had placed on the altar. He now offers it to FAME*)

This is my sonnet. Is it well done?

(*FAME takes it, reads it in silence, while the POET watches her rapturously.*)

FAME. You're a bit of all right.

DE REVES. What?

FAME. Some poet.

DE REVES. I—I—scarcely . . . understand.

FAME. You're IT.

DE REVES. But . . . it is not possible . . . are you she that knew Homer?

FAME. Homer? Lord, yes. Blind old bat, 'e could n't see a yard.

DE REVES. O Heavens!

(*FAME walks beautifully to the window. She opens it and puts her head out.*)

FAME (*in a voice with which a woman in an upper story would cry for help if the house was well alight*). Hi! Hi! Boys! Hi! Say, folks' Hi!

(*The murmur of a gathering crowd is heard. FAME blows her trumpet.*)

FAME. Hi, he's a poet. (*Quickly, over her shoulder.*) What's your name?

DE REVES. De Reves.

FAME. His name's de Reves.

DE REVES. Harry de Reves.

FAME. His pals call him Harry.

THE CROWD. Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

FAME. Say, what's your favourite color?

DE REVES I . . . I . . . I don't quite understand

FAME. Well, which do you like best, green or blue?

DE REVES. Oh — er — blue. (*She blows her trumpet out of the window.*) No — er — I think green.

FAME Green is his favourite colour.

THE CROWD. Hooray! Hooray! Hooray!

FAME. 'Ere, tell us something. They want to know all about yer.

DE REVES. Would n't you perhaps . . . would they care to hear my sonnet, if you would — er . . .

FAME (*picking up quill*). Here, what's this?

DE REVES. Oh, that's my pen.

FAME (*after another blast on her trumpet*). He writes with a quill. (*Cheers from THE CROWD.*)

FAME (*going to a cupboard*). Here, what have you got in here?

DE REVES. Oh . . . er . . . those are my breakfast things.

FAME (*finding a dirty plate*). What have yer had on this one?

DE REVES (*mournfully*). Oh, eggs and bacon.

FAME (*at the window*). He has eggs and bacon for breakfast.

THE CROWD. Hip hip hip *hooray!*

Hip hip hip *hooray!*

Hip hip hip *hooray!*

FAME. Hi, and what's this?

DE REVES (*miserably*). Oh, a golf stick.

FAME He's a man's man! He's a virile man! He's a manly man!

(*Wild cheers from THE CROWD, this time only from women's voices.*)

DE REVES. Oh, this is terrible. This is terrible. This is terrible.

(*FAME gives another peal on her horn. She is about to speak.*)

DE REVES (*solemnly and mournfully*). One moment, one moment . . .

FAME. Well, out with it.

DE REVES. For ten years, divine lady, I have worshipped you, offering all my songs . . . I find . . . I find I am not worthy . . .

FAME. Oh, you're all right.

DE REVES. No, no, I am not worthy. It cannot be. It cannot possibly be. Others deserve you more. I must say it! *I cannot possibly love you.* Others are worthy. You will find others. But I, no, no, no. It cannot be. It cannot be. Oh, pardon me, but it *must* not.

(*Meanwhile FAME has been lighting one of his cigarettes.*

She sits in a comfortable chair, leans right back, and puts her feet right up on the table amongst the poet's papers.)

Oh, I fear I offend you. But — it cannot be.

FAME. Oh, that's all right, old bird; no offence. I ain't going to leave you.

DE REVES. But — but — but — I do not understand.

FAME. I've come to stay, I have.

(*She blows a puff of smoke through her trumpet.*)

[CURTAIN]

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GATE¹

BEULAH MARIE DIX

SCENE: In the cheerless hour before the dawn of a wet spring morning five gentlemen-troopers of the broken Royalist army, fagged and outworn with three long days of siege, are holding, with what strength and courage are left them, the Gatehouse of the Bridge of Cashala, which is the key to the road that leads into Connaught. The upper chamber of the Gatehouse, in which they make their stand, is a narrow, dim-lit apartment, built of stone. At one side is a small fireplace, and beside it a narrow, barred door, which leads to the stairhead. At the end of the room, gained by a single raised step, are three slit-like windows, breast-high, designed, as now used, for defense in time of war. The room is meagrely furnished, with a table on which are powder-flask, touch-box, etc., for charging guns, a stool or two, and an open keg of powder. The whole look of the place, bare and martial, but depressed, bespeaks a losing fight. On the hearth the ashes of a fire are white, and on the chimneypiece a brace of candles are guttering out.

The five men who hold the Gatehouse wear much soiled and torn military dress. They are pale, powder-begrimed, sunken-eyed, with every mark of weariness of body and

¹ Included by permission of the author and of Messrs Henry Holt and Company, the publishers, from the volume *Allison's Lad and Other Martial Interludes* 1910)

soul. Their leader, JOHN TALBOT, is standing at one of the shot-windows, with piece presented, looking forth. He is in his mid-twenties, of Norman-Irish blood, and distinctly of a finer, more nervous type than his companions. He has been wounded, and bears his left hand wrapped in a bloody rag. DICK FENTON, a typical, careless young English swashbuckler, sits by the table, charging a musket, and singing beneath his breath as he does so. He, too, has been wounded, and bears a bandage about his knee. Upon the floor (at right) KIT NEWCOMBE lies in the sleep of utter exhaustion. He is an English lad, in his teens, a mere tired, haggard child, with his head rudely bandaged. On a stool by the hearth sits MYLES BUTLER, a man of JOHN TALBOT's own years, but a slower, heavier, almost sullen type. Beside him kneels PHELIMY DRISCOLL, a nervous, dark Irish lad, of one and twenty. He is resting his injured arm across BUTLER's knee, and BUTLER is roughly bandaging the hurt.

For a moment there is a weary, heavy silence, in which the words of the song which FENTON sings are audible. It is the doleful old strain of "the hanging-tune."

FENTON (*singing*).

Fortune, my foe, why dost thou frown on me,
And will thy favors never greater be?
Wilt thou, I say, forever breed me pain,
And wilt thou not restore my joys again?

BUTLER (*shifting Driscoll's arm, none too tenderly*).
More to the light!

DRISCOLL (*catching breath with pain*). Ah! Softly, Myles!

JOHN TALBOT (*leaning forward tensely*). Ah!

FENTON. Jack! Jack Talbot! What is it that you see?

JOHN TALBOT (*with the anger of a man whose nerves are*

strained almost beyond endurance). What should I see but Cromwell's watch-fires along the boreen? What else should I see, and the night as black as the mouth of hell? What else should I see, and a pest choke your throat with your fool's questions, Dick Fenton!

(*Resumes his watch.*)

FENTON (*as who should say: "I thank you!"*). God 'a' mercy — Captain Talbot!

(*Resumes his singing.*)

DRISCOLL. God's love! I bade ye have a care, Myles Butler.

BUTLER (*tying the last bandage*). It's a stout heart you have in you, Phelimy Driscoll — you to be crying out for a scratch. It's better you would have been, you and the like of you, to be stopping at home with your mother.

(*Rises and takes up his musket from the corner by the fireplace.*)

DRISCOLL. You — you dare — you call me — coward? Ye black liar! I'll lesson ye! I'll —

(*Tries to rise, but in the effort sways weakly forward and rests with his head upon the stool which BUTLER has quitted.*)

BUTLER. A' Heaven's name, ha' done with that hanging tune! Ha' done, Dick Fenton! We're not yet at the gallows' foot.

(*Joins JOHN TALBOT at the shot-windows.*)

FENTON. Nay, Myles, for us 'tis like to be nothing half so merry as the gallows.

BUTLER. Hold your fool's tongue!

NEWCOMBE (*crying out in his sleep*). Oh! Oh!

JOHN TALBOT. What was that?

FENTON. 'Twas naught but young Newcombe that cried out in the clutch of a nightmare.

BUTLER. 'Tis time Kit Newcombe rose and stood his watch.

JOHN TALBOT (*leaving the window*). Nay, 'tis only a boy.
Let him sleep while he can! Let him sleep!

BUTLER. Turn and turn at the watch, 'tis but fair. Stir
yonder sluggard awake, Dick!

FENTON. Aye. (Starts to rise.)

JOHN TALBOT. Who gives commands here? Sit you
down, Fenton! To your place, Myles Butler!

BUTLER. Captain of the Gate! D'ye mark the high tone
of him, Dick?

JOHN TALBOT (*tying a fresh bandage about his hand*). You're out there, Myles. There is but one Captain of the
Gate of Connaught — he who set me here — my cousin,
Hugh Talbot.

BUTLER (*muttering*). Aye, and it's a deal you'll need to
be growing, ere you fill Hugh Talbot's shoes.

JOHN TALBOT. And that's a true word! But 'twas Hugh
Talbot's will that I should command, here at the Bridge of
Cashala. And as long as breath is in me I —

DRISCOLL (*raising his head heavily*). Water! Water!
Myles! Dick! Will ye give me to drink, lads? Jack Talbot!
I'm choked wi' thirst.

JOHN TALBOT. There's never a drop of water left us,
Phelimy, lad.

FENTON. Owen Bourke drained the last of it, God rest
him!

BUTLER. 'Tis likely our clever new Captain of the Gate
will hit on some shift to fill our empty casks.

(DRISCOLL rises heavily.)

JOHN TALBOT. Not the new Captain of the Gate. The
old Captain of the Gate — Hugh Talbot. He'll be here this
day — this hour, maybe.

FENTON. That tale grows something old, Jack Talbot.

JOHN TALBOT. He swore he'd bring us succor. He —

(DRISCOLL tries to unbar the exit door.)

Driscoll! Are you gone mad? Stand you back from that door!

(*Thrusts DRISCOLL from the door.*)

DRISCOLL (*half delirious*). Let me forth! The spring — 't is just below — there on the river-bank! Let me slip down to it — but a moment — and drink!

JOHN TALBOT. Cromwell's soldiers hold the spring.

DRISCOLL. I care not! Let me forth and drink! Let me forth!

JOHN TALBOT. 'T would be to your death.

BUTLER. And what will he get but his death if he stay here, Captain Talbot?

DRISCOLL (*struggling with JOHN TALBOT*). I'm choked! I'm choked, I tell ye! Let me go, Jack Talbot! Let me go!

NEWCOMBE (*still half-asleep, rises to his knees, with a terrible cry, and his groping hands upthrust to guard his head*). God's pity! No! no! no!

DRISCOLL (*shocked into sanity, staggers back, crossing himself*). God shield us!

BUTLER. Silence that whelp!

FENTON. Clear to the rebel camp they'll hear him!

JOHN TALBOT (*catching NEWCOMBE by the shoulder*). Newcombe' Kit Newcombe'

NEWCOMBE. Ah, God! Keep them from me! Keep them from me!

JOHN TALBOT. Ha' done! Ha' done!

NEWCOMBE. Not that! Not the butt of the muskets! Not that! Not that!

JOHN TALBOT (*stifling NEWCOMBE's outcry with a hand upon his mouth*). Wake! You're dreaming!

DRISCOLL. 'T is ill luck! 'T is ill luck comes of such dreaming!

NEWCOMBE. Drogheda! I dreamed I was at Drogheda, where my brother — my brother — they beat out his

brains — Cromwell's men — with their clubbed muskets — they —

(*Clings shuddering to JOHN TALBOT.*)

FENTON. English officers that serve amongst the Irish — 't is thus that Cromwell uses them!

BUTLER. English officers — aye, like ourselves!

JOHN TALBOT. Be quiet, Kit! You're far from Drogheda — here at the Bridge of Cashala.

BUTLER. Aye, safe in Cashala Gatehouse, with five hundred of Cromwell's men sitting down before it.

JOHN TALBOT. Keep your watch, Butler!

NEWCOMBE. You give orders? You still command, Jack? Where's Captain Talbot, then?

(*Snatches up his sword and rises.*)

BUTLER (*quitting the window*). Aye, where *is* Captain Talbot?

JOHN TALBOT. You say —

FENTON (*rising*). We all say it.

JOHN TALBOT. Even thou, Dick?

DRISCOLL. He does not come! Hugh Talbot does not come!

FENTON. He bade us hold the bridge one day. We've held it three days now.

BUTLER. And where is Hugh Talbot with the aid he promised?

JOHN TALBOT. He promised. He has never broken faith. He will bring us aid.

FENTON. Aye, if he be living!

DRISCOLL. Living? You mean that he — Och, he's dead! Hugh Talbot's dead! And we're destroyed! We're destroyed!

NEWCOMBE (*cowering*). The butt of the muskets!

FENTON. God'

(*Deliberately BUTLER lays down his musket.*)

JOHN TALBOT. Take up your piece!

BUTLER. Renounce me if I do!

FENTON. I stand with you, Myles Butler. Make terms for us, John Talbot, or, on my soul, we'll make them for ourselves.

JOHN TALBOT. Surrender?

NEWCOMBE. Will Cromwell spare us, an we yield ourselves now? Will he spare us? Will he —

FENTON. 'T is our one chance.

NEWCOMBE. Give me that white rag!

(Crosses and snatches a bandage from chimneypiece.)

FENTON (*drawing his ramrod*). Here's a staff!

(*Together FENTON and NEWCOMBE make ready a flag of truce.*)

JOHN TALBOT (*struggling with BUTLER and DRISCOLL*). A black curse on you!

BUTLER. We'll not be butchered like oxen in the shambles!

JOHN TALBOT. Your oaths!

BUTLER. We'll not fight longer to be knocked on the head at the last.

NEWCOMBE. No! No! Not that! Out with the flag, Dick!

FENTON. A light here at the grating!

(*NEWCOMBE turns to take a candle, obedient to FENTON's order. At that moment, close at hand, a bugle sounds.*)

JOHN TALBOT. Hark!

DRISCOLL. The bugle! They're upon us!

BUTLER (*releasing his hold on JOHN TALBOT*). What was that?

JOHN TALBOT. You swore to hold the bridge.

BUTLER. Swore to hold it one day. We've held it three days now.

FENTON. And the half of us are slain.

NEWCOMBE. And we've no water — and no food!

JOHN TALBOT (*pointing to the powder-keg*). We have powder in plenty.

DRISCOLL. We can't drink powder. Ah, for God's love, be swift, Dick Fenton! Be swift!

JOHN TALBOT. You shall not show that white flag!

(*Starts toward FENTON, hand on sword*.)

BUTLER (*pinioning JOHN TALBOT*). God's death! We shall! Help me here, Phelimy!

JOHN TALBOT. A summons to parley. What see you, Fenton?

FENTON (*at the shot-window*). Torches coming from the boreen, and a white flag beneath them. I can see the faces.
(*With a cry*)

Look, Jack! A' God's name! Look!

(JOHN TALBOT *springs to the window*.)

DRISCOLL. What is it you're seeing?

FENTON. It is —

JOHN TALBOT (*turning from the window*). 'T is Hugh Talbot comes! 'T is the Captain of the Gate!

BUTLER. With them? A prisoner?

JOHN TALBOT. No, no! No prisoner! He wears his sword.

(BUTLER *snatches up his piece and resumes watch*.)

FENTON. Then he'll have made terms with them! Terms!

NEWCOMBE (*embracing DRISCOLL*). Terms for us! Terms for us!

JOHN TALBOT. I told ye truth. He has come Hugh Talbot has come.

(*Goes to door*.)

HUGH TALBOT (*speaks outside*). Open! I come alone, and in peace. Open unto me!

JOHN TALBOT. Who goes there?

HUGH TALBOT (*outside*). The Captain of the Gate!

(JOHN TALBOT unbars the door, and bars it again upon the entrance of HUGH TALBOT. The latter comes slowly into the room. He is a man in his late thirties, a tall, martial figure, clad in much-worn velvet and leather, with sword at side. The five salute him as he enters.)

HUGH TALBOT (*halts and for a moment surveys his followers*) Well, lads?

(*The five stand trembling on the edge of a nervous break, unable for the moment to speak*)

NEWCOMBE. We thought — we thought — that you — that you —

(*Breaks into childish sobbing.*)

FENTON. What terms will they grant us, sir?

JOHN TALBOT. Sir, we have held the bridge.

HUGH TALBOT. You five —

JOHN TALBOT. Bourke is dead, sir, and Tregarris, and Langdale, and — and James Talbot, my brother.

DRISCOLL. And we've had no water, sir, these many hours.

HUGH TALBOT. So! You're wounded, Phelimy.

DRISCOLL. 'T is not worth heeding, sir.

HUGH TALBOT. Kit! Kit!

(*At the voice NEWCOMBE pulls himself together.*)

A light here! Dick, you've your pouch under your hand?

FENTON. 'T is here, sir.

(*Offers his tobacco pouch.*)

HUGH TALBOT (*filling his pipe*). Leave the window, Myles! They've promised us a half hour's truce — and Cromwell's a man of his word.

NEWCOMBE (*bringing a lighted candle*). He'll let us pass free now, sir, will he not?

HUGH TALBOT (*lighting his pipe at the candle*). You're not afraid, Kit?

NEWCOMBE. I? Faith, no, sir. No! Not now!

HUGH TALBOT. Sit ye down, Phelimy, lad! You look dead on your feet. Give me to see that arm!

(As HUGH TALBOT starts toward DRISCOLL, his eye falls on the open keg of powder. He draws back hastily, covering his lighted pipe)

JACK TALBOT! Who taught ye to leave your powder uncovered, where lighted match was laid?

BUTLER. My blame, sir.

(Covers the keg.)

JOHN TALBOT. We opened the keg, and then —

FENTON. Truth, we did not cover it again, being somewhat pressed for time.

(The five laugh, half hysterically.)

HUGH TALBOT (sitting by fire). And you never thought, maybe, that in that keg there was powder enough to blow the bridge of Cashala to hell?

JOHN TALBOT. It seemed a matter of small moment, sir.

HUGH TALBOT. Small moment! Powder enough, put case ye set it there, at the stairhead — d'ye follow me? — powder enough to make an end of Cashala Bridge for all time — aye, and of all within the Gatehouse. You never thought on that, eh?

JOHN TALBOT. We had so much to think on, sir.

HUGH TALBOT. I did suspect as much. So I came hither to recall the powder to your minds.

DRISCOLL. We thought —

(BUTLER motions him to be silent.)

We thought maybe you would not be coming at all, sir. Maybe you would be dead.

HUGH TALBOT. Well? What an if I had been dead? You had your orders. You did not dream of giving up the Bridge of Cashala — eh, Myles Butler?

BUTLER (*after a moment*). No, sir.

HUGH TALBOT. Nor you, Dick Fenton?

FENTON. Sir, I — No!

HUGH TALBOT (*smoking throughout*). Good lads! The wise heads were saying I was a stark fool to set you here at Cashala. But I said: I can be trusting the young riders that are learning their lessons in war from me. I'll be safe putting my honor into their hands. And I was right, wasn't I, Phelimy Driscoll?

DRISCOLL. Give us the chance, sir, and we'll be holding Cashala, even against the devil himself!

FENTON. Aye, well said!

HUGH TALBOT. Sure, 'tis a passing good substitute for the devil sits yonder in Cromwell's tent.

NEWCOMBE (*with a shudder*). Cromwell!

HUGH TALBOT. Aye, he was slaying your brother at Drogheda, Kit, and a fine, gallant lad your brother was. And I'm thinking you're like him, Kit. Else I should n't be trusting you here at Cashala.

NEWCOMBE. I — I — Will they let us keep our swords?

HUGH TALBOT. Well, it's with yourselves it lies, whether you'll keep them or not.

FENTON. He means — we mean — on what terms, sir, do we surrender?

HUGH TALBOT. Surrender? Terms?

JOHN TALBOT. We thought, sir, from your coming under their white flag — perhaps you had made terms for us.

HUGH TALBOT. How could I make terms?

NEWCOMBE. Captain!

(*At a look from HUGH TALBOT he becomes silent, fighting for self-control.*)

HUGH TALBOT. How could I make terms that you would hear to? Cashala Bridge is the gate of Connaught.

JOHN TALBOT. Yes,

HUGH TALBOT. Give Cromwell Cashala Bridge, and he'll be on the heels of our women and our little ones. At what price would ye be selling their safety?

DRISCOLL. Cromwell — when he takes us — when he takes us —

NEWCOMBE. He'll knock us on the head!

HUGH TALBOT. Yes. At the last. Your five lives against our people's safety. You'd not give up the bridge?

JOHN TALBOT. Five? Our five? But you — you are the sixth.

FENTON. You stay with us, Captain. And then we'll fight — you'll see how we shall fight.

HUGH TALBOT. I shall be seeing you fight, perhaps, but I cannot stay now at Cashala.

(Rises.)

DRISCOLL. Ye won't be staying with us?

BUTLER (*laughing harshly*). Now, on my soul! Is this your faith, Hugh Talbot? One liar I've followed, Charles Stuart, the son of a liar, and now a second liar —

JOHN TALBOT (*catching BUTLER'S throat*). A plague choke you!

HUGH TALBOT (*stepping between JOHN TALBOT and BUTLER*). Ha' done, Jack! Ha' done! What more, Myles Butler?

BUTLER Tell us whither you go, when you turn your back on us that shall die at Cashala — you that come walking under the rebel flag — that swore to bring us aid — and have not brought it! Tell us whither you go now!

HUGH TALBOT. Well, I'm a shade doubtful, Myles, my lad, though hopeful of the best.

BUTLER. 'Tis to Cromwell you go — you that have made your peace with him — that have sold us —

DRISCOLL. Captain! A' God's name, what is it that you're meaning?

HUGH TALBOT. I mean that you shall hold the Bridge of Cashala — whatever happen to you — whatever happen to me —

FENTON. To you? Captain Talbot!

HUGH TALBOT. I am going unto Cromwell — as you said, Myles. I gave my promise.

DRISCOLL. Your promise?

JOHN TALBOT. We — have been very blind. So — they made you prisoner?

HUGH TALBOT. Aye, Jack When I tried to cut my way through to bring you aid. And they granted me this half hour on my parole to come unto you.

JOHN TALBOT. To come —

HUGH TALBOT. To counsel you to surrender. And I have given you counsel. Hold the bridge! Hold it! Whatever they do!

DRISCOLL. Captain! Captain Talbot! God of Heaven! If you go back — 'tis killed you'll be among them!

HUGH TALBOT. A little sooner than you lads? Aye, true!

FENTON. They cannot! Even Cromwell —

HUGH TALBOT. Tut, tut, Dick! It's little ye know of Cromwell.

JOHN TALBOT Then — you mean —

HUGH TALBOT. An you surrender Cashala, we may all six pass free. An you hold Cashala, they will hang me, here before your eyes.

(DRISCOLL gives a rattling cry.)

BUTLER. God forgive me!

HUGH TALBOT. You have your orders. Hold the bridge!

(Turns to door.)

JOHN TALBOT (barring his way). No, no! You shan't go forth!

FENTON. God's mercy, no!

HUGH TALBOT. Are you stark crazed?

FENTON. You shall stay with us.

JOHN TALBOT. What's your pledged word to men that know not honor?

HUGH TALBOT. My word. Unbar the door, Jack. Why, lad, we're traveling the same road.

FENTON. God! But we'll give them a good fight at the last.

(*Goes to the shot-window.*)

Take up your musket, Kit.

NEWCOMBE. But I — Captain! When you are gone, I — I —

HUGH TALBOT. I'll not be far. You'll hold the bridge?

JOHN TALBOT. Aye, sir.

BUTLER. We've powder enough — you said it, sir, — laid there at the stairhead, to blow the bridge to hell.

HUGH TALBOT. Aye, Myles, you've hit it!

(*Holds out his hand.*)

BUTLER. Not yet, sir!

HUGH TALBOT. Hereafter, then. God speed you, lads!

JOHN TALBOT. Speed you, sir!

(*All five stand at salute as HUGH TALBOT goes out. In the moment's silence upon his exit, JOHN TALBOT bars the door and turns to his comrades.*)

You have — Hugh Talbot's orders. Take your pieces! Driscoll! Newcombe!

(*Obediently the two join FENTON at windows.*)

Butler!

BUTLER. Aye! We have Hugh Talbot's orders.

(*Points to powder-keg.*)

JOHN TALBOT. Are you meaning —

BUTLER. It's not I will be failing him now!

FENTON (*at window*). God! They waste no time. []

JOHN TALBOT. Already — they have dared —

FENTON. Here — this moment — under our very eyes!

DRISCOLL. Christ Jesus!

(Goes back from the window, with his arm across his eyes, and falls on his knees in headlong prayer.)

JOHN TALBOT. Kit! Kit Newcombe!

(Motions him to window.)

NEWCOMBE. I cannot! I—

JOHN TALBOT. Look forth! Look! And remember—when you meet them—remember!

(NEWCOMBE stands swaying, clutching at the grating of the window, as he looks forth.)

Lads!

(Motions to BUTLER and FENTON to carry the powder to the stairhead.)

The time is short. His orders!

(DRISCOLL raises his head and gazes fixedly toward the center of the room.)

FENTON. Yonder, at the stairhead.

BUTLER. Aye.

(FENTON and BUTLER carry the keg to the door.)

NEWCOMBE. Not that! Not that death! No! No!

JOHN TALBOT. Be silent! And look yonder! Driscoll! Fetch the light! Newcombe! Come! You have your places, all.

DRISCOLL. But, Captain! The sixth man — where will the sixth man be standing?

(There is a blank silence, in which the men look questioningly at DRISCOLL's rapt face and at one another.)

JOHN TALBOT. Sixth?

FENTON. What sixth?

DRISCOLL. The blind eyes of ye' Yonder!

(Comes to the salute, even as, a few moments before, he has saluted HUGH TALBOT, living.)

NEWCOMBE gives a smothered cry, as one who half sees, and takes courage. FENTON dazedly starts to salute.

*Outside a bugle sounds, and a voice, almost at the door,
is heard to speak.)*

VOICE OUTSIDE. For the last time: will you surrender you?

JOHN TALBOT (*in a loud and confident voice*). No! Not while our commander stands with us!

VOICE OUTSIDE. And who might your commander be?

JOHN TALBOT. Hugh Talbot, the Captain of the Gate! The light here, Phelimy.

(JOHN TALBOT *bends to set the candle to the powder
that shall destroy Cashala Gatehouse, and all within it.
His mates are gathered round him, with steady,
bright faces, for in the little space left vacant in their
midst they know in that minute that HUGH TALBOT
stands.*)

[CURTAIN]

GETTYSBURG¹

PERCY MACKAYE

SCENE A woodshed, in the ell of a farm-house.

The shed is open on both sides, front and back, the apertures being slightly arched at the top (In bad weather, these presumably may be closed by big double doors, which stand open now — swung back outward beyond sight.) Thus the nearer opening is the proscenium arch of the scene, under which the spectator looks through the shed to the background — a grassy yard, a road with great trunks of soaring elms, and the glimpse of a green hillside. The ceiling runs up into a gable with large beams.

On the right, at back, a door opens into the shed from the house kitchen. Opposite it, a door leads from the shed into the barn. In the foreground, against the right wall, is a work-bench. On this are tools, a long, narrow, wooden box, and a small oil-stove, with steaming kettle upon it.

Against the left wall, what remains of the year's wood supply is stacked, the uneven ridges sloping to a jumble of stovewood and kindlings mixed with small chips of the floor, which is piled deep with mounds of crumbling bark, chips and wood-dust.

Not far from this mounded pile, at right centre of the scene, stands a wooden armchair, in which LINK TAD-

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BOURNE, *in his shirt-sleeves, sits drowsing. Silhouetted by the sunlight beyond, his sharp-drawn profile is that of an old man, with white hair cropped close, and gray moustache of a faded black hue at the outer edges. Between his knees is a stout thong of wood, whittled round by the draw shave which his sleeping hand still holds in his lap. Against the side of his chair rests a thick wooden yoke and collar. Near him is a chopping-block.*

In the woodshed there is no sound or motion except the hum and floating steam from the tea-kettle. Presently the old man murmurs in his sleep, clenching his hand. Slowly the hand relaxes again.

From the door, right, comes POLLY — a sweet-faced girl of seventeen, quietly mature for her age. She is dressed simply. In one hand she carries a man's wide-brimmed felt hat, over the other arm a blue coat. These she brings toward LINK. Seeing him asleep, she begins to tiptoe, lays the coat and hat on the chopping-block, goes to the bench, and trims the wick of the oil-stove, under the kettle. Then she returns and stands near LINK, surveying the shed.

On closer scrutiny, the jumbled woodpile has evidently a certain order in its chaos; some of the splittings have been piled in irregular ridges; in places, the deep layer of wood-dust and chips has been scooped, and the little mounds slope and rise like miniature valleys and hills¹

Taking up a hoe, POLLY — with careful steps — moves among the hollows, placing and arranging sticks of kindling, scraping and smoothing the little mounds with the hoe. As she does so, from far away, a bugle sounds.

¹ A suggestion for the appropriate arrangement of these mounds may be found in the map of the battle-field annexed to the volume by Captain R. K. Beecham, entitled *Gettysburg* (A. C. McClurg, 1911).

LINK

(snapping his eyes wide open, sits up)

Hello! Cat-nappin' was I, Polly?

POLLY

Just

A kitten-nap, I guess.

(Laying the hoe down, she approaches.)
The yoke done?

LINK

(giving a final whittle to the yoke-collar thong)

Thar!

When he's ben steamed a spell, and bended snug,
I guess this feller'll sarve t' say "Gee" to —

*(Lifting the other yoke-collar from beside his chair, he
holds the whittled thong next to it, comparing the two
with expert eye.)*

and "Haw" to him. Beech every time, Sir; beech
or walnut. Hang me if I'd shake a whip
at birch, for ox-yokes. — Polly, are ye thar?

POLLY

Yes, Uncle Link.

LINK

What's that I used to sing ye?

"Polly, put the kettle on,
Polly, put the kettle on,
Polly, put the kittle on — "

(Chuckling)

We'll give this feller a dose of ox-yoke tea!

POLLY

The kettle's boilin'.

LINK

Wall, then, steep him good.

(Polly takes from Link the collar-thong, carries it to the work-bench, shoves it into the narrow end of the box, which she then closes tight and connects — by a piece of hose — to the spout of the kettle. At the farther end of the box, steam then emerges through a small hole.)

POLLY

You're feelin' smart to-day.

LINK

Smart! — Wall, if I could git a hull man to swap legs with me, mebbe I'd arn my keep. But this here settin' dead an' alive, without no legs, day in, day out, don't make an old hoss wuth his oats.

POLLY

(cheerfully)

I guess you'll soon be walkin' round.

LINK

Not if

that doctor feller has his say: He says
I can't never go agin this side o' Jordan;
and looks like he's 'bout right. — Nine months
to-morrer,
Polly, gal, sence I had that stroke.

POLLY

(pointing to the ox-yoke)

You're fitter
sittin' than most folks standin'.

LINK
(*briskly*)

Oh, they can't
keep my two hands from makin' ox-yokes. That's
my second natur' sence I was a boy.

(Again in the distance a bugle sounds. LINK starts.)
What's that?

POLLY

Why, that's the army veterans
down to the graveyard. This is Decoration
mornin': you ain't forgot?

LINK

So 't is, so 't is.
Roger, your young man — ha! (*chuckling*) he come and
axed me
was I a-goin' to the cemetery.
“Me? Don’t I look it?” says I. Ha! “Don’t I look it?”

POLLY

He meant — to decorate the graves.

LINK

O’ course;
but I must take my little laugh. I told him
I guessed I wa’n’t persent’ble anyhow,
my mustache and my boots wa’n’t blacked this mornin’.
I don’t jest like t’ talk about my legs.—
Be you a-goin’ to take your young school folks,
Polly?

POLLY

Dear no! I told my boys and girls
to march up this way with the band. I said
I’d be a-stayin’ home and learnin’ how
to keep school in the woodpile here with you.

LINK

(*looking up at her proudly*)

Schoolma'am at seventeen! Some smart, I tell ye'

POLLY

(*caressing him*)

Schoolmaster, you, past seventy; that's smarter!

I tell 'em I learn from you, so's I can teach

my young folks what the study-books leave out.

LINK

Sure ye don't want to jine the celebratin'?

POLLY

No, sir! We're goin' to celebrate right here,
and you're to teach me to keep school some more.

(*She holds ready for him the blue coat and hat.*)

LINK

(*looking up*)

What's thar?

POLLY

Your teachin' rig.

(*She helps him on with it.*)

LINK

The old blue coat! —

My, but I'd like to see the boys — (*gazing at the hat*) the
Grand

Old Army Boys! (*dreamily*) Yes, we was boys: jest
boys!

Polly, you tell your young folks, when they study
the books, that we was nothin' else but boys

jest fallin' in love, with best gals left t' home —
the same as you; and when the shot was singin',
we pulled their picters out, and prayed to them
'most morn'n the Almighty.

(LINK looks up suddenly — a strange light in his face.
Again, to a far strain of music, the bugle sounds.)

Thar she blows

Agin!

POLLY

They're marchin' to the graves with flowers.

LINK

My Godfrey! 't ain't so much thinkin' o' flowers
and the young folks, their faces, and the blue
line of old fellers marchin' — it's the music!
that old brass voice a-callin'! Seems as though,
legs or no legs, I'd have to up and foller
to God-knows-whar, and holler — holler back
to guns roarin' in the dark. No; durn it, no!
I jest can't stan' the music.

POLLY

(goes to the work-bench, where the box is steaming)

Uncle Link,
you want that I should steam this longer?

LINK
(absently)

Oh,

A kittleful, a kittleful.

POLLY
(coming over to him)

Now, then,

I'm ready for school. — I hope I've drawed the map
all right.

LINK

Map? Oh, the map!

(Surveying the woodpile reminiscently, he nods.)

Yes, thar she be:

old Gettysburg!

POLLY

I know the places — most.

LINK

So, do ye? Good, now: whar's your marker?

POLLY

(taking up the hoe)

Here.

LINK

Willoughby Run: whar's that?

POLLY

(pointing with the hoe toward the left of the woodpile)

That's farthest over

next the barn door.

LINK

My, how we fit the Johnnies
thar, the fust mornin'! Jest behind them willers,
acrost the Run, that's whar we captur'd Archer.
My, my!

POLLY

Over there — that's Seminary Ridge.

(She points to different heights and depressions, as LINK
nods his approval.)

Peach Orchard, Devil's Den, Round Top, the Wheat-
field —

LINK

Lord, Lord, the Wheatfield!

POLLY
(*continuing*)

Cemetery Hill,
Little Round Top, Death Valley, and this here
is Cemetery Ridge.

LINK
(*pointing to the little flag*)

And colors flyin'
We *kep' em* flyin' thar, too, all three days,
From start to finish.

POLLY
Have I learned 'em right?

LINK

A number One, chick! Wait a mite Culp's Hill:
I don't jest spy Culp's Hill.

POLLY
There wa'n't enough
kindlin's to spare for that. It ought to lay
east there, towards the kitchen.

LINK

Let it go!
That's whar us Yanks left our back door ajar
and Johnson stuck his foot in: *kep' it thar*,
too, till he got it squoze off by old Slocum
Let Culp's Hill lay for now — Lend me your marker.

(POLLY *hands him the hoe. From his chair, he reaches
with it and digs in the chips.*)

Death Valley needs some scoopin' deeper. So:
smooth off them chips.

(POLLY does so with her foot.)

You better guess 't was deep

As hell, that second day, come sundown. — Here,

(He hands back the hoe to her.)

flat down the Wheatfield yonder.

(POLLY does so.)

God a'mighty!

That Wheatfield: wall, we flatted it down flatter
than any pancake what you ever cooked,
Polly; and 't wa'n't no maple syrup neither
was runnin', slipp'ry hot and slimy black,
all over it, that nightfall.

POLLY

Here's the road

to Emmetsburg.

LINK

No, 't ain't. this here's the pike
to Taneytown, where Sykes's boys come sweatin',
after an all-night march, jest in the nick
to save our second day. The Emmetsburg
road's thar. — Whar was I, 'fore I fell cat-nappin'?

POLLY

At sunset, July second, sixty-three.

LINK

(nodding, reminiscent)

The Bloody Sundown! God, that crazy sun:
she set a dozen times that afternoon,

red-yeller as a punkin jack-o'-lantern,
rairin' and pitchin' through the roarin' smoke
till she clean busted, like the other bombs,
behind the hills.

POLLY

My! Wa'n't you never scart
and wished you'd stayed t' home?

LINK

Scart? Wall, I wonder!
Chick, look a-thar: them little stripes and stars.
I heerd a feller onct, down to the store, —
a dressy mister, span-new from the city —
layin' the law down: "All this *stars and stripes*,"
says he, "and *red and white and blue* is rubbish,
mere sentimental rot, spread-eagleism!"
"I wan' t' know!" says I. "In sixty-three,
I knowed a lad, named Link. Onct, after sundown
I met him stumbling' — with two dead men's muskets
for crutches — towards a bucket, full of ink —
water, they called it. When he'd drunk a spell,
he tuk the rest to wash his bullet-holes —
Wall, sir, he had a piece o' splintered stick,
with *red and white and blue*, tore 'most t' tatters,
a-danglin' from it. 'Be you color sergeant?'
says I. 'Not me,' says Link; 'the sergeant 's dead;
but when he fell, he handed me this bit
o' *rubbish* — red and white and blue.' And Link
he laughed. 'What be you laughin' for?' says I.
'Oh, nothin'. Ain't it lovely, though!'" says Link.

POLLY

What did the span-new mister say to that?

LINK

I did n't stop to listen. Them as never
heerd dead men callin' for the colors don't
guess what they be.

(Sitting up and blinking hard)

But this ain't keepin' school!

POLLY

(quietly)

I guess I'm learnin' somethin', Uncle Link

LINK

The second day, 'fore sunset.

(He takes the hoe and points with it.)

Yon's the Wheatfield.

Behind it thar lies Longstreet with his rebels.
Here be the Yanks, and Cemetery Ridge
behind 'em. Hancock — he's our general —
he's got to hold the Ridge, till reinforcements
from Taneytown. But lose the Wheatfield, lose
the Ridge, and lose the Ridge — lose God-and-all! —
Lee, the old fox, he'd nab up Washington,
Abe Lincoln, and the White House in one bite! —
So the Union, Polly — me and you and Roger,
your Uncle Link, and Uncle Sam — is all
thar — growin' in that Wheatfield.

POLLY

(smiling proudly)

And they're growin'
still!

LINK

Not the wheat, though. Over them stone walls,
 thar comes the Johnnies, thick as grasshoppers:
 gray legs a-jumpin' through the tall wheat-tops.
 and now thar ain't no tops, thar ain't no wheat,
 thar ain't no lookin': jest blind feelin' round
 in the black mud, and trampin' on boys' faces,
 and grapplin' with hell-devils, and stink o' smoke,
 and stingin' smother, and — up thar through the dark —
 that crazy punkin sun, like an old moon
 lopsided, crackin' her red shell with thunder!

(In the distance, a bugle sounds, and the low martial music of a brass band begins. Again LINK's face twitches, and he pauses, listening. From this moment on, the sound and emotion of the brass music, slowly growing louder, permeates the scene.)

POLLY

Oh! What was God a-thinkin' of, t' allow
 the created world to act that awful?

LINK

Now,
 I wonder! — Cast your eye along this hoe:
(He stirs the chips and wood-dirt round with the hoe-iron.)

Thar in that poked up mess o' dirt, you see
 yon weeny chip of ox-yoke? — That's the boy
 I spoke on: Link, Link Tadbourne: "Chipmunk Link,"
 they call him, 'cause his legs is spry's a squirrel's. —
 Wall, mebbe some good angel, with bright eyes
 like yourn, stood lookin' down on him that day,
 keepin' the Devil's hoe from crackin' him.

(Patting her hand, which rests on his hoe)

If so, I reckon, Polly, it was you.
 But mebbe jest Old Nick, as he sat hoein'
 them hills, and haulin' in the little heaps
 o' squirmin' critters, kind o' reco'nized
 Link as his livin' image, and so kep' him
 to put in an airthly hell, whar thar ain't no legs,
 and worn-out devils sit froze in high-backed chairs,
 list'nin' to bugles — bugles — bugles, callin'.

(LINK *clutches the sides of his chair, staring. The music draws nearer. POLLY touches him soothingly.*)

POLLY

Don't, dear; they'll soon quit playin'. Never mind 'em.

LINK

(relaxing under her touch)

No, never mind; that's right. It's jest that onct —
 onct we was boys, onct we was boys — with legs
 But never mind. An old boy ain't a bugle.
Onct, though, he was: and all God's life a-snortin'
 outn his nostrils, and Hell's mischief laughin'
 outn his eyes, and all the mornin' winds
 a-blowin' *Glory Hallelujahs*, like
 brass music, from his mouth. — But never mind!
 'T ain't nothin': boys in blue ain't bugles now.
 Old brass gits rusty, and old underpinnin'
 gits rotten, and trapped chipmunks lose their legs.

(With smouldering fire)

But jest the same —

(His face convulses and he cries out, terribly — straining in his chair to rise.)

— for holy God, that band!

Why don't they stop that band!

POLLY
(*going*)

I'll run and tell them.

Sit quiet, dear. I'll be right back.

(*Glancing back anxiously, POLLY disappears outside.*

The approaching band begins to play "John Brown's Body" LINK sits motionless, gripping his chair.)

LINK

Set quiet!

Dead folks don't set, and livin' folks kin stand,
and Link — he kin set quiet. — God a'mighty,
how *kin* he set, and them a-marchin' thar
with old John Brown? Lord God, you ain't forgot
the boys, have ye? the boys, how they come marchin'
home to ye, live and dead, behind old Brown,
a-singin' *Glory* to ye! Jest look down:
thar's Gettysburg, thar's Cemetery Ridge:
don't say ye disremember *them!* And thar's
the colors. Look, he's picked 'em up — the sergeant's
blood splotched 'em some — but thar they be, still flyin'!
Link done that: Link — the spry boy, what they call
Chipmunk: you ain't forgot his double-step,
have ye?

(*Again he cries out, beseechingly*)

My God, why do You keep on marchin'
and leave him settin' here?

(*To the music outside, the voices of children begin to sing the words of "John Brown's Body" At the sound, LINK's face becomes transformed with emotion, his body shakes, and his shoulders heave and straighten.*)

No! — I — won't — set!

(*Wresting himself mightily, he rises from his chair, and stands.*)

Them are the boys that marched to Kingdom-Come
ahead of us, but we keep fallin' in line.

Them voices — Lord, I guess you've brought along
Your Sunday choir of young angel folks
to help the boys out.

(Following the music with swaying arms)

Glory! — Never mind
me singin': you kin drown me out. But I'm
goin' t' jine in, or bust!

(Joining with the children's voices, he moves unconsciously along the edge of the woodpile. With stiff steps — his one hand leaning on the hoe, his other reached as to unseen hands, that draw him — he totters toward the sunlight and the green lawn, at back. As he does so, his thin, cracked voice takes up the battle-hymn where the children's are singing it.)

“ — a-mould’rin’ in the grave,
John Brown’s body lies a-mould’rin’ in the grave,
John Brown’s body lies a-mould’rin’ in the grave,
But his soul goes — ”

(Suddenly he stops, aware that he is walking, and cries aloud, astounded)

Lord, Lord, my legs!

Whar did Ye git my legs?

(Shaking with delight, he drops his hoe, seizes up the little flag from the woodpile, and waves it joyously.)

I’m comin’, boys!

Link’s loose agin: Chipmunk has sprung his trap

(With tottering gait, he climbs the little mound in the woodpile.)

Now, boys, three cheers for Cemetery Ridge!

Jine in, jine in!

(Swinging the flag)

Hooray! — Hooray! — Hooray!

(Outside, the music grows louder, and the voices of old men and children sing martially to the brass music. With his final cheer, LINK stumbles down from the mound, brandishes in one hand his hat, in the other the little flag, and stumps off toward the approaching procession into the sunlight, joining his old cracked voice, jubilant, with the singers:)

“—ry hallelujah,
Glory, glory hallelujah,
His truth is marchin’ on!”

[CURTAIN]

LONESOME-LIKE¹

HAROLD BRIGHOUSE

CHARACTERS

SARAH ORMEROD, An old woman

EMMA BRIERLEY, A young woman

THE REV. FRANK ALLEYNE, A curate

SAM HORROCKS, A young man

THE SCENE represents the interior of a cottage in a Lancashire village. Through the window at the back the gray row of cottages opposite is just visible. The outside door is next to the window. Door left. As regards furniture the room is very bare. The suggestion is not of an empty room, but a stripped room. For example, there are several square patches where the distemper of the walls is of a darker shade than the rest, indicating the places once occupied by pictures. There is an uncovered deal table and two chairs by it near the fire-place right. Attached to the left wall is a dresser and a plate-rack above it containing a few pots. The dresser has also one or two utensils upon it. A blackened kettle rests on the top of the cooking-range, but the room contains only the barest necessities. The floor is uncarpeted. There are no window curtains, but a yard of cheap muslin is fastened across the window, not coming, however, high enough

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to prevent a passer-by from looking in, should he wish to do so. On the floor, near the fire, is a battered black tin trunk, the lid of which is raised. On a peg behind the door left is a black silk skirt and bodice and an old-fashioned beaded bonnet. The time is afternoon. As the curtain rises the room is empty. Immediately, however, the door left opens and SARAH ORMEROD, an old woman, enters, carrying clumsily in her arms a couple of pink flannelette nightdresses, folded neatly. Her black stuff dress is well worn, and her wedding-ring is her only ornament. She wears elastic-sided boots, and her rather short skirt shows a pair of gray worsted stockings. A small plaid shawl covers her shoulders. SARAH crosses and puts the night-dresses on the table, surveying the trunk ruefully. There is a knock at the outside door and she looks up.

SARAH. Who's theer?

EMMA (*without*). It's me, Mrs. Ormerod, Emma Brierley.

SARAH. Eh, coom in, Emma, lass.

(Enter EMMA BRIERLEY. *She is a young weaver, and, having just left her work, she wears a dark skirt, a blouse of some indeterminate blue-gray shade made of cotton, and a large shawl over her head and shoulders in place of a jacket and hat. A colored cotton apron covers her skirt below the waist, and the short skirt displays stout stockings similar to SARAH'S. She wears clogs, and the clothes — except the shawl — are covered with ends of cotton and cotton-wool fluff. Even her hair has not escaped. A pair of scissors hangs by a cord from her waist.*)

SARAH. Tha's kindly welcoom. It's good o' thee to think o' coomin' to see an ould woman like me.

EMMA (*by door*). Nought o' th' sort, Mrs. Ormerod.

Th' mill's just loosed and A thowt A'd step in as A were passin' and see 'ow tha was feeling like.

SARAH (*crossing to box*). Oh, nicely, nicely, thankee. It's only my 'ands as is gone paralytic, tha knaws, an' a weaver's no manner o' good to nobody without th' use o' 'er 'ands. A'm all reeght in masel'. That's worst of it.

EMMA. Well, while A'm 'ere, Mrs. Ormerod, is theer nougnt as A can do for thee?

SARAH. A dunno as theer is, thankee, Emma.

EMMA (*taking her shawl off, looking round and hanging it on a peg in the door*) Well, A knaws better. What wert doin' when A coom in? Packin' yon box?

SARAH. Aye. Tha sees theer's a two three things as A canna bear thowt o' parting from. A don't reeghtly knew if they'll let me tak' 'em into workus wi' me, but A canna have 'em sold wi' rest of stuff.

EMMA (*crosses below SARAH to box, going on her knees*). Let me help yo'.

SARAH. Tha's a good lass, Emma. A'd tak' it kindly of thee.

EMMA. They'd do wi' packin' a bit closer. A dunno as they'd carry safe that road.

SARAH. A know. It's my 'ands, tha sees, as mak's it difficult for me.

(*Sits on chair.*)

EMMA. Aye. A'll soon settle 'em a bit tighter.

(*Lifts all out, buries her arms in the box, and rearranges its contents.*)

SARAH. But what's 'appened to thy looms, lass? They'll not weave by 'emselves while thee's 'ere, tha knows.

EMMA (*looking round*). Eh, looms is all reeght. Factory's stopped. It's Saturday afternoon.

SARAH. So 't is. A'd clean forgot. A do forget time o' th' week sittin' 'ere day arter day wi' nougnt to do.

EMMA So that's all reeght. Tha's no need to worry about me. Tha's got trouble enough of thy own.

(*Resuming at the box*)

SARAH. Aye, th' art reeght theer, lass. Theer's none on us likes to think o' goin' to workus when we're ould.

EMMA. 'Appen it'll be all reeght after all. Parson's coomin' to see thee.

SARAH. Aye, A knew 'e is. A dunno, but A'm in 'opes 'e'll do summat for me. Tha can't never tell what them folks can do.

EMMA (*kneeling up*). Tha keep thy pecker oop, Mrs. Ormerod. That's what my moother says to me when A tould 'er A were coomin' in to thee. Keep 'er pecker oop, she says. It's not as if she'd been lazy or a wastrel, she says; Sal Ormerod 's bin a 'ard worker in 'er day, she says. It's not as if it were thy fault. Tha can't 'elp tha 'ands goin' paralytic.

(*She continues rummaging in the trunk while speaking.*)

SARAH. Naw. It's not my fault. God knaws A'm game enough for work, ould as A am. A allays knawed as A'd 'ave to work for my living all th' days o' my life. A never was a savin' sort.

EMMA. Theer's nowt against thee for that. Theer's soom as can be careful o' theer brass an' soom as can't. It's not a virtue, it's a gift. That's what my moother allays says.

(*Resumes packing.*)

SARAH. She's reeght an' all. We never 'ad the gift o' savin', my man and me. An' when Tom Ormerod took an' died, the club money as A drew all went on 'is funeral an' 'is gravestone. A warn't goin' to 'ave it said as 'e warn't buried proper.

EMMA. It were a beautiful funeral, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. Aye.

EMMA. A will say that, beautiful it were. A never seen a

better, an' A goes to all as A can. (*Rises.*) A dotes on buryin's. Are these the next?

(*Crosses before table for nightdresses, takes the night-dresses, and resumes packing.*)

SARAH. Aye.

(*Emma puts them in and rests on her knees listening to Sarah's next speech.*)

SARAH (*pause*). A've been a 'ouseproud woman all my life, Emma, an' A've took pride in 'avin' my bits o' sticks as good as another's. Even th' manager's missus oop to factory 'ouse theer, she never 'ad a better show o' furniture nor me, though A says it as shouldn't. An'it tak's brass to keep a decent 'ouse over your yead. An' we allays 'ad our full week's 'ollydayin' at Blackpool reg'lar at Wakes time. Us did n't 'ave no childer o' our own to spend it on, an' us spent it on ourselves. A allays 'ad a plenty o' good food in th' 'ouse an' never stinted nobody, an' Tom 'e liked 'is beer an' 'is baccy. 'E were a pigeon-fancier, too, in 'is day, were my Tom, an' pigeon-fancying runs away wi' a mint o' money. No. Soom'ow theer never was no brass to put in th' bank. We was allays spent oop coom wages neeight.

EMMA. A knew, Mrs. Ormerod. May be A'm young, but A knew 'ow 't is. We works cruel 'ard in th' mill, an' when us plays, us plays as 'ard too (*pause*), an' small blame to us either. It's our *own* we're spendin'.

SARAH. Aye. It's a 'ard life, the factory 'and's. A can mind me many an' many 's the time when th' warnin' bell went on th' factory lodge at ha'f past five of a winter's mornin' as A've craved for another ha'f hour in my bed, but Tom 'e got me oop an' we was never after six passin' through factory gates all th' years we were wed. There's not many as can say they were never late. "Work or clem," that were what Tom allays tould me th' ould bell were sayin'. An' 'e were reeght, Emma. "Work or clem"

is God's truth. (EMMA's *head in box*) An' now th' time 's coom when A can't work no more. But Parson 's a good man, 'e'll mak' it all reeght. (EMMA's *head appears*) Eh, it were good o' thee to coom in, lass. A bit o' coompany do mak' a world o' difference. A 'm twice as cheerful as A were.

EMMA. A 'm glad to 'ear tha say so, Mrs. Ormerod. (*Rises from the box*) Is theer owt else?

SARAH. A were thinkin' A 'd like to tak' my black silk as A 've worn o' Sundays this many a year, but A canna think it's reeght thing for workus

EMMA. Oh, thee tak' it, Mrs Ormerod.

SARAH. A 'd dearly love to Tha sees A 'm noan in debt, nobbut what chairs an table 'ull payfor, and A doan't like thowt o' leaving owt as A 'm greatly fond of.

EMMA. Yo doan't, Mrs. Ormerod. Thee tak' it. Wheer is it? A 'll put un in. Theer's lots o' room on top. A 'll see un 's noan crushed.

SARAH. It's hanging theer behind door. (EMMA *crosses back to door, gets clothes*) A got un out to show Parson. A thowt A 'd ask un if it were proper to tak' it if A 've to go. My best bonnet 's with it, an' all.

(EMMA *goes below table, takes the frock and bonnet, folds it on the table, and packs it.*)

EMMA. A 'll put un in.

SARAH. A 'm being a lot o' trouble to thee, lass.

EMMA. That's nowt; neighbors mun be neighborly.

(Gets bonnet from table and packs it.)

SARAH (*after a pause, looking round*). Place doan't look much, an' that's a fact. Th' furniture 's bin goin' bit by bit, and theer ain't much left to part wi' now.

EMMA. Never mind; it 'ull be all reeght now Parson 's takken thee oop.

SARAH. A 'm hopin' so. A *am* hopin' so. A never could abide th' thowt o' th' workus — me as 'as bin an 'ard-

workin' woman. A could n't fancy sleepin' in a strange bed wi' strange folk round me, an' when th' Matron said, "Do that," A'd ave to do it, an' when she said, "Go theer," A'd ave to a' gone wheer she tould me — me as 'as allays 'eld my yead 'igh an' gone the way A pleased masel'. Eh, it's a terrible thowt, the workus.

EMMA (*rising*). Now tha's sure that's all?

SARAH (*after a pause, considers*). Eh, if A havna forgot my neeghtcaps. (*Rises, moves centre and stops.*) A suppose they'll let me wear un in yonder. A doan't reeghtly think as A'd get my rest proper wi'out my neeghtcaps.

EMMA. Oh, they'll let thee wear un all reeght.

SARAH (*as she goes*). A'll go an' get un. (*Exit right, returning presently with the white nightcaps*) That's all now.

(*Gives them to Emma, who meets her at centre.*)

EMMA (*putting them in*). Yo' never 'ad no childer, did yo', Mrs. Ormerod?

SARAH. No, Emma, no — maybe that's as broad as 's long. (*Sits above fire.*) Yo' never knew 'ow they go. Soom on 'em turn again yo' when they're growed, or they get wed themselves an' forget all as yo' 've done for 'em, like a many A could name, and they're allays a worrit to yo' when they're young

EMMA. A'm gettin' wed masel' soon, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. Are yo', now, Emma? Well, tha art not one o' them graceless good-for-nowts. Tha'll never forget thy moother, A knew, nor what she's done for thee. Who's tha keepin' coompany with?

EMMA. It's Joe Hindle as goes wi' me, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. 'Idle, 'Idle? What, not son to Robert 'Idle, 'im as used to be overlooker in th' factory till 'e went to foreign parts to learn them Roossians 'ow to weave?

EMMA. Aye, that's 'im.

SARAH. Well, A dunno aught about th' lad. 'Is faither

were a fine man. A minds 'im well. But A'll tell thee this, Emma, an' A'll tell it thee to thy faice, 'e 's doin' well for 'isself, is young Joe 'Indle.

EMMA. Thankee, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. Gettin' wed! Think o' that. Why, it seems as 't were only t'other day as tha was runnin' about in short frocks, an' now tha's growed up and gettin' thasel' wed! Time do run on. Sithee, Emma, tha's a good lass, A've gotten an ould teapot in yonder (*indicating her bedroom*) as my moother give me when A was wed. A were n't for packing it in box because o' risk o' breaking it. A were going to carry it in my 'and. A'd a mind to keep it till A died, but A reckon A'll 'ave no use for it in workus.

EMMA. Tha's not gone theer yet

SARAH. Never mind that. (*Slowly rises*) A'm going to give it thee, lass, for a weddin'-gift. Tha'll tak' care of it, A knew, and when thy eye catches it, 'appen tha'll spare me a thowt.

EMMA. Oh, no, Mrs. Ormerod, A could n't think o' tak-kin' it.

SARAH. Art too proud to tak' a gift from me?

EMMA. No. Tha knaws A'm not

SARAH. Then hold thy hush. A'll be back in a minute. Happen A'd best tidy masel' up too against Parson cooms.

EMMA. Can A help thee, Mrs. Ormerod?

SARAH. No, lass, no. A can do a bit for masel'. My 'ands isn't that bad; A canna weave wi' 'em, but A can do all as A need do

EMMA. Well, A'll do box up.

(*Crosses to table right and gets cord.*)

SARAH. Aye.

EMMA. All reeght.

(*Exit SARAH. A man's face appears outside at the window. He surveys the room, and then the face vanishes as he knocks at the door.*)

Who's theer?

SAM (*without*). It's me, Sam Horrocks (*Emma crosses left and opens door.*) May A coom in?

EMMA. What dost want?

SAM (*on the doorstep*). A want a word wi' thee, Emma Brierley. A followed thee oop from factory and A've bin waitin' out theer till A'm tired o' waitin'.

EMMA. Well, tha'd better coom in. A 'ave n't time to talk wi' thee at door.

(EMMA lets him in, closes door, and, leaving him standing in the middle of the room, resumes work on her knees at the box. SAM HORROCKS is a hulking young man of a rather vacant expression. He is dressed in mechanic's blue dungarees. His face is oily and his clothes stained. He wears boots, not clogs. He mechanically takes a ball of oily black cotton-waste from his right pocket when in conversational difficulties and wipes his hands upon it. He has a red muffler round his neck without collar, and his shock of fair hair is surmounted by a greasy black cap, which covers perhaps one tenth of it.)

SAM (*after watching Emma's back for a moment*). Wheer's Mrs. Ormerod?

EMMA (*without looking up*). What's that to do wi' thee?

SAM (*apologetically*). A were only askin'. Tha need n't be short wi' a chap.

EMMA. She's in scullery washin' er, if tha wants to knaw.

SAM. Oh!

EMMA (*looking at him over her shoulder after a slight pause*). Doan't tha tak' thy cap off in 'ouse, Sam Horrocks?

SAM. Naw.

EMMA. Well, tha can tak' it off in this 'ouse or get t' t' other side o' door.

SAM. (*Takes off his cap and stuffs it in his left pocket after*

trying his right and finding the ball of waste in it.) Yes, Emma.

(EMMA resumes work with her back towards him and waits for him to speak. But he is not ready yet.)

EMMA. Well, what dost want?

SAM. Nought. — Eh, but tha art a gradely wench.

EMMA. What's that to do wi' thee?

SAM. Nought.

EMMA. Then just tha mind thy own business, an' doan't pass compliments behind folks' backs.

SAM. A did n't mean no 'arm

EMMA. Well?

SAM. It's a fine day, is n't it? For th' time o' th' year?

EMMA. Aye.

SAM. A very fine day.

EMMA. Aye.

SAM (*desperately*). It's a damned fine day.

EMMA. Aye.

SAM (*after a moment*). Dost know my 'ouse, Emma?

EMMA. Aye.

SAM. Wert ever in it?

EMMA. Not sin' tha moother died.

SAM. Naw. A suppose not. Not sin' ma moother died. She were a fine woman, ma moother, for all she were bed-ridden.

EMMA. She were better than 'er son, though that's not saying much neither.

SAM. Naw, but tha does mind ma 'ouse, Emma, as it were when she were alive?

EMMA. Aye.

SAM. A've done a bit at it sin' them days. Got a new quilt on bed from Co-op. Red un, it is, wi' blue stripes down 'er.

EMMA. Aye.

SAM. Well, Emma?

EMMA (*over her shoulder*). Well, what? What's thy 'ouse an' thy quilt to do wi' me?

SAM. Oh, nought. — Tha does n't 'elp a feller much, neither.

EMMA. (*Rises and faces him. SAM is behind corner table and backs a little before her.*) What's tha gettin' at, Sam Horrocks? Tha's got a tongue in thy faice, has n't tha?

SAM. A suppose so. A doan't use it much though.

EMMA. No. Tha's not much better than a tongue-tied idiot, Sam Horrocks, allays mooning about in th' engine-house in daytime an' sulkin' at 'ome neeghtime.

SAM. Aye, A'm lonely sin' ma moother died. She did 'ave a way wi' 'er, ma moother. Th' 'ould plaice 'as not bin t' same to me sin' she went. Daytime, tha knaws, A'm all reeght. Tha sees, them engines, them an' me 's pals. They talks to me an' A understands their ways. A doan't some-'ow seem to understand th' ways o' folks like as A does th' ways o' them engines.

EMMA. Tha does n't try. T' other lads goes rattin' or dog-feeghtin' on a Sunday or to a football match of a Saturday afternoon. Tha stays moonin' about th' 'ouse. Tha's not likely to understand folks. Tha's not sociable.

SAM. Naw. That's reeght enough. A nobbut get laughed at when A tries to be sociable an' stand my corner down at th' pub wi' th' rest o' th' lads. It's no use ma tryin' to soop ale; A can't carry th' drink like t' others. A knaws A've ways o' ma own.

EMMA. Tha has that.

SAM. A'm terrible lonesome, Emma. That theer 'ouse o' mine, it do want a wench about th' plaice. Th' engines is all reeght for days, but th' neeghts is that lonesome-like tha would n't believe.

EMMA. Tha's only thasel' to blame. It's nought to do wi' me, choosehow.

SAM. Naw? A'd — A'd 'oped as 'ow it might 'ave, Emma.

EMMA (*approaching threateningly*) Sam Horrocks, if tha doan't tell me proper what tha means A'll give tha such a slap in th' mouth.

SAM (*Backing before her*). Tha does fluster a feller, Emma. Just like ma moother.

EMMA. A wish A 'ad bin. A'd 'ave knocked some sense into thy silly yead.

SAM (*suddenly and clumsily kneels above chair left of table*). Wilt tha 'ave me, Emma? A mak'good money in th' engine-house.

EMMA. Get oop, tha great fool If tha didn't keep thasel' so close wi' tha moonin' about in th' engine-'ouse an' never speakin' a word to nobody, tha'd knew A were keepin' coompany wi' Joe Hindle.

SAM (*scrambling up*). Is that a fact, Emma?

EMMA. Of course it's a fact. Banns 'ull be oop come Sunday fortneight. We've not 'idden it neither. It's just like the great blind idiot that tha art not to 'a' seen it long enough sin'.

SAM. A wer' n't aware. By gum, A 'ad so 'oped as tha 'd 'ave me, Emma.

EMMA (*a little more softly*). A'm sorry if A've 'urt thee, Sam.

SAM. Aye. It were ma fault. Eh, well, A think mebbe A'd best be goin'.

EMMA (*lifts box to left*). Aye. Parson's coomin' to see Mrs. Ormerod in a minute.

SAM (*with pride*). A knew all about that, anyhow.

EMMA. She'm in a bad way. A dunno masel' as Parson can do much for 'er.

SAM. It's 'ard lines on an ould un. Well, yo' 'll not want me 'ere. A'll be movin' on. (*Getting his cap out*) No offense,

Emma, A 'ope A'd 'ave asked thee first if A'd known as 'e were after thee. A've bin tryin' for long enough.

EMMA. No. Theer's no offense, Sam. Tha's a good lad if tha art a fool, an' mebbe tha's not to blame for that. Good-bye.

SAM. Good-bye, Emma. An' — An' A 'ope 'e'll mak' thee 'appy. A'd dearly like to coom to th' weddin' an' shake 'is 'and. (MRS. ORMEROD heard off right.)

EMMA. A'll see tha's asked. Theer's Mrs. Ormerod stirrin'. Tha'd best be gettin'.

SAM. All reeght. Good-bye, Emma.

EMMA. Good-bye, Sam

(Exit SAM left centre. MRS. ORMEROD comes from the inside door. She has a small blue teapot in her hand.)

SARAH. Was anybody 'ere, Emma? A thowt A yeard someun talkin', only my yearin' isn't what it used to be, an' A warn't sure.

EMMA. It were Sam Horrocks, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. Yon lad of ould Sal Horrocks as died last year? 'Im as is n't reeght in 'is yeard?

EMMA. Aye. 'E's bin askin' me to wed 'im.

SARAH (incensed). In my 'ouse? Theer's imperence for thee, an' tha promised to another lad, an' all. A'd 'ave set about 'im wi' a stick, Emma

EMMA. 'E did n't know about Joe. It made me feel cruel like to 'ave to tell 'im.

SARAH. 'E'll get ower it. Soom lass 'll tak' 'im.

EMMA. A suppose so.

SARAH (coming down, putting the teapot in EMMA's hands). Well, theer's teapot.

EMMA (meets SARAH right centre, examining teapot). It's beautiful. Beautiful, it is, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. Aye, it's a bit o' real china is that. Tha'll tak' care on 't, lass, won't thee?

EMMA. A will an' all.

SARAH. Aye. A knaw it's safe wi' thee. Mebbe safer than it would be in workus A can't think well on yon plaice. A goa cold all ower at thowt of it.

(*A knock at the door.*)

EMMA. That'll be Parson.

SARAH (*crosses left, smoothing her hair*). Goa an' look through window first, an' see who 't is.

EMMA (*puts teapot on table; looking through window*). It's not th' ould Parson. It's one o' them young curate chaps.

SARAH. Well, coom away from window an' sit thee down. It won't do to seem too eager. Let un knock again if it's not th' ould Parson.

(EMMA leaves the window and goes to right of table. The knock is repeated)

SARAH (*raising her voice*). Coom in so who tha art. Door's on latch.

(Enter the REV. FRANK ALLEYNE. *He is a young curate, a Londoner and an Oxford man, by association, training, and taste totally unfitted for a Lancashire curacy, in which he is, unfortunately, no exception.*)

ALLEYNE. Good afternoon, Mrs Ormerod.

SARAH. Good day to thee.

ALLEYNE. I'm sorry to say Mr. Blundell has had to go to a missionary meeting, but he asked me to come and see you in his stead.

SARAH. Tha's welcoom, lad. Sit thee doon.

(EMMA comes below table left. *Dusts a chair, which does n't need it, with her apron. ALLEYNE raises a deprecatory hand. SARAH's familiarity, as it seems to him, offends him. He looks sourly at EMMA and markedly ignores her.*)

ALLEYNE. Thank you; no, I won't sit, I cannot stay long.

SARAH Just as tha likes. It's all same to me.

(EMMA stays by right of table.)

ALLEYNE. How is it with you, Mrs. Ormerod?

SARAH. It might be worse. A've lost th' use o' my 'ands, and they're takkin' me to workus, but A'm not dead yet, and that's summat to be thankful for.

ALLEYNE Oh, yes, yes, Mrs. Ormerod. The — er — message I am to deliver is, I fear, not quite what Mr. Blundell led you to hope for His efforts on your behalf have — er — unfortunately failed. He finds himself obliged to give up all hope of aiding you to a livelihood. In fact — er — I understand that the arrangements made for your removal to the workhouse this afternoon must be carried out. It seems there is no alternative. I am grieved to be the bearer of bad tidings, but I am sure you will find a comfortable home awaiting you, Mrs. — er — Ormerod.

SARAH. 'Appen A shall an' 'appen A shan't. Theer's no tellin' 'ow you'll favor a thing till you've tried it.

ALLEYNE. You must resign yourself to the will of Providence. The consolations of religion are always with us. Shall I pray with you?

SARAH. A never were much at prayin' when A were well off, an' A doubt the Lord ud tak' it kind o' selfish o' me if A coom cryin' to 'im now A'm 'urt.

ALLEYNE. He will understand. Can I do nothing for you?

SARAH. A dunno as tha can, thankin' thee all same

ALLEYNE. I am privileged with Mr. Blundell's permission to bring a little gift to you, Mrs. Ormerod. (*Feeling in his coat-tails and bringing out a Testament*) Allow me to present you with this Testament, and may it help you to bear your Cross with resignation. (*He hands her the Testament. SARAH does not raise her hands, and it drops on her lap. ALLEYNE takes it again and puts it on the table.*) Ah, yes, of course — your poor hands — I understand.

SARAH. Thankee kindly. Readin' don't coom easy to me, an' my eyes aren't what they were, but A'll mak' most of it.

ALLEYNE. You will never read that in vain. And now, dear sister, I must go. I will pray for strength for you. All will be well. Good day.

SARAH. Good day to thee.

(*Exit ALLEYNE.*)

EMMA. Tha does n't look so pleased wi' tha gift, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. It's not square thing of th' ould Parson, Emma. 'E should 'a' coom an' tould me 'issel'. Looks like 'e were feart to do it. A never could abide them curate lads. We doan't want no grand Lunnon gentlemen down 'ere. 'E doan't understand us no more than we understand 'im. 'E means all reeght, poor lad. Sithee, Emma, A've bin a church-goin' woman all my days. A was browt oop to church, an' many's th' bit o' brass they've 'ad out o' me in my time. An' in th' end they send me a fine curate with a tuppenny Testament. That's all th' good yo' get out o' they folks

EMMA. We 'm chapel to our 'ouse, an' 'e didn't forget to let me see 'e knew'd it, but A doan't say as it's ony different wi' chapels, neither. They get what they can outer yo', but yo' must n't look for nothin' back, when th' pinch cooms. (*Clock outside strikes three.*) Sakes alive, theer's clock goin' three. My dinner 'ull be nice an' cold.

SARAH. Eh, what's that, lass? Dost mean to tell me tha's bin clemmin' all this time?

EMMA. A coom 'ere straight from factory.

SARAH. Then tha does n't move till tha's 'ad summat to eat.

EMMA. My dinner's ready for me at whoam, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH. Then just look sharp an' get it, tha silly lass. Tha's no reeght to go wi'out thy baggin'.

EMMA (*putting her shawl on*). All reeght. A'm off.

(*Picks up teapot*.)

SARAH. Tha's bin a world o' coomfort to me, Emma. It'll be 'arder to bear when tha's gone. Th'thowt's too much for me. Eh, lass, A'm feart o' yon great gaunt building wi' th' drear windows.

EMMA. 'Appen ma moother 'ull coom in. Tha'll do wi' a bit o' coompany. A'll ask her to coom an' fetch thee a coop o' tea bye-an'-bye.

(*A knock at the door*.)

SARAH Who's theer?

SAM (*without*). It's only me, Mrs. Ormerod.

EMMA. A do declare it's that Sam Horrocks again.

SARAH Sam Horrocks! What can th' lad be after now?
(*Calling*) Hast tha wiped thy boots on scraper?

SAM Yes, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH Coom in then. (EMMA in left corner. Enter SAM.)
Tak' thy cap off.

SAM Yes, Mrs. Ormerod.

SARAH What dost want?

SAM A've soom business 'ere A thowt A'd find thee by thyself. A'll coom again (*bolting nervously for the door*).

SARAH Let that door be. Dost say tha's got business 'ere?

SAM Aye, wi' thee. A'd like a word wi' thee private.

(EMMA moves to open door.)

SARAH All reeght. Emma's just goin' to 'er dinner.

EMMA (*speaking through door*) A'll ask my moother to step in later on, Mrs. Ormerod, and thank thee very much for th' teapot.

SARAH A'll be thankful if she'll coom. (Exit EMMA with teapot.) Now, Sam Horrocks, what's the matter wi' thee?

SAM (*dropping the cotton-waste he is fumbling with and picking it up*). It's a fine day for th' time o' th' year.

SARAH. Didst want to see me private to tell me that, lad?

SAM. Naw, not exactly.

SARAH. Well, what is it then? Coom, lad, A'm waitin' on thee. Art tongue-tied? Can't tha quit mawlin' yon bit o' waste an' tell me what 't is tha wants?

SAM (*desperately*). Mebbe it'll not be so fine in th' mornin'.

SARAH. A'll tell thee what A'd do to thee if A'ad the use o' my 'ands, my lad. A'd coom aside thee and A'd box thy ears. If tha's got business wi' me, tha'd best state it sharp or A'll be showin' thee the shape o' my door.

SAM. Tha do fluster a feller so as A doan't knew wheer A am. A've not been nagged like that theer sin' my ould moother died.

SARAH. A've 'eerd folk say Sal Horrocks were a slick un wi' 'er tongue.

SAM (*admiringly*). She were that. Rare talker she were. She'd lie theer in 'er bed all day as it might be in yon corner, an' call me all th' names she could put her tongue to, till A couldn't tell ma reegeht 'and from ma left. (*Still reminiscent*) Wonnerful sperrit, she 'ad, considerin' she were bed-ridden so long. She were only a little un an' cripple an' all, but by gum, she could sling it at a feller if 'er tea weren't brewed to 'er taste. Talk! She'd talk a donkey's yead off, she would.

SARAH (*on her mettle*). An' A'll talk thy silly yeard off an' all if tha doan't get sharp to tellin' me what tha wants after in my 'ouse, tha great mazed idiot.

SAM. Eh, but she were a rare un.

SARAH. The lad's daft aboot his moother.

SAM (*detachedly, looking at window; pause*). Wunnerful breeeght the sky is, to-day.

SARAH. Tha great 'ulkin' fool A'd tak' a broomstick to thee if — if A'd the use o' my 'ands.

SAM. Now, if that is n't just what ma moother used to say.

SARAH. Dang thy moother. An' A doan't mean no disrespect to 'er neither. She's bin in 'er grave this year an' more, poor woman

SAM. A canna 'elp thinkin' to 'er all same. Eh, but she were wunnerful.

SARAH. An' A'd be wunnerful too. A'd talk to thee. A'd call thee if A were thy moother an' A'd to live aside o' thee neeight an' day.

SAM (*eagerly*). Eh, by gum, but A wish tha would.

SARAH. Would what?

SAM. Would coom an' live along wi' me.

SARAH. Tha great fool, what does mean? Art askin' me to wed thee?

SAM. A did n't mean to offend thee, Mrs. Ormerod. A'm sorry A spoke. A allays do wrong thing. But A did so 'ope as tha might coom. Tha sees A got used to moother. A got used to 'earin' 'er cuss me. A got used to doin' for 'er an' A've nought to do in th' evenings now. It's terrible lonesome in th' neighttime. An' when notion coom to me, A thowt as A'd mention un to thee casual.

SARAH. Dost mean it, Sam Horrocks? Dost tha know what tha's sayin', or is tha fooln' me?

SAM. O' course A mean it. Tha sees A'm not a marryin' sort. Th' lasses won't look at me. A'm silly Sam to them, A knows it. A've a slate loose, A shan't never get wed. A thowt A'd mebbe a chance wi' yon lass as were 'ere wi' thee, but hoo towld me A were too late. A allays were slow. A left askin' too long an' A've missed 'er. A gets good money, Mrs. Ormerod, but A canna talk to a young wench. They mak's me go 'ot and cowld all over. An' when curate towld me as tha was to go to workus, A thowt A'd a chance wi' thee. A knew'd it were n't a big chance, because my plaice ain't much cop after what tha's bin used to 'ere. A've got no fine fixin's nor big chairs an' things like as tha used to 'ave. Eh, but A would 'ave loved to do for thee as A used

to do for ma moother, an' when A yeerd thee talkin' now
 an' callin' me a fool an' th' rest, by gum, A just yearned to
 'ave thee for allays. Tha'd fill 'er plaice wunnerful well.
 A'd just a' loved to adopt thee.

SARAH. To adopt me?

SAM. Ay, for a moother. A 'm sorry tha can't see thy way
 to let me. A did n't mean no offence (*turning to the door*).

SARAH. 'Ere, lad, tha tell me this. If A'd said tha might
 tak' me for thy moother, what wouldst ha' done?

SAM. Why, kissed thee, an' takken thee oop in ma arms
 whoam to thy bed. It's standin' ready in yonder wi' clean
 sheets an' all, an' a new quilt from Co-op. A 'opes you 'll
 pardon th' liberty o' mentioning it.

SARAH. A new quilt, Sam? What's color?

SAM. Red, wi' blue stripes down 'er.

SARAH. A'm not a light weight, tha knows.

SAM. A'd carry thee easy — "Strong in th' arm and
 weak in th' yead." It's an ould sayin', but it's a good un,
 an' it fits.

SARAH. Wilt tha try, Sam Horrocks? God bless thee,
 wilt tha try, lad?

SAM. Dost mean it, Mrs. Ormerod? Dost mean tha 'll
 coom? Tha's not coddin' a feller, art tha?

SARAH. No, A'm not coddin'. Kiss me, Sam, my son.

(*He kisses her and lifts her in his arms.*)

SAM. By gum, but that were good. A 'll coom back fur
 thy box.

SARAH. Carry me careful, tha great luny. A'm not a
 sack o' flour.

SAM. Eh, but A likes to year thee talk. Yon was real
 mootherly, it were.

(*Exit through door, carrying her.*)

[CURTAIN at clink of latch]

RIDERS TO THE SEA¹

J. M. SYNGE

CHARACTERS

MAURYA, an old woman

BARTLEY, her son

CATHLEEN, her daughter

NORA, a younger daughter

MEN AND WOMEN

SCENE: An island off the West of Ireland. Cottage kitchen, with nets, oilskins, spinning-wheel, some new boards standing by the wall, etc. CATHLEEN, a girl of about twenty, finishes kneading cake, and puts it down in the pot-oven by the fire; then wipes her hands, and begins to spin at the wheel. NORA, a young girl, puts her head in at the door.

NORA (*in a low voice*). Where is she?

CATHLEEN. She's lying down, God help her, and maybe sleeping, if she's able.

(NORA comes in softly, and takes a bundle from under her shawl.)

CATHLEEN (*spinning the wheel rapidly*). What is it you have?

NORA. The young priest is after bringing them. It's a

¹ Included by permission of Messrs John W. Luce and Company.

shirt and a plain stocking were got off a drowned man in Donegal.

(CATHLEEN stops her wheel with a sudden movement, and leans out to listen.)

NORA. We're to find out if it's Michael's they are; some time herself will be down looking by the sea.

CATHLEEN How would they be Michael's, Nora? How would he go the length of that way to the far north?

NORA. The young priest says he's known the like of it. "If it's Michael's they are," says he, "you can tell herself he's got a clean burial by the grace of God, and if they're not his, let no one say a word about them, for she'll be getting her death," says he, "with crying and lamenting"

(The door which NORA half closed is blown open by a gust of wind.)

CATHLEEN (looking out anxiously). Did you ask him would he stop Bartley going this day with the horses to the Galway fair?

NORA. "I won't stop him," says he, "but let you not be afraid. Herself does be saying prayers half through the night, and the Almighty God won't leave her destitute," says he, "with no son living"

CATHLEEN Is the sea bad by the white rocks, Nora?

NORA. Middling bad, God help us There's a great roaring in the west, and it's worse it'll be getting when the tide's turned to the wind.

(She goes over to the table with the bundle.)
Shall I open it now?

CATHLEEN. Maybe she'd wake up on us, and come in before we'd done. (Coming to the table) It's a long time we'll be, and the two of us crying.

NORA (goes to the inner door and listens). She's moving about on the bed. She'll be coming in a minute.

CATHLEEN. Give me the ladder, and I'll put them up in

the turf-loft, the way she won't know of them at all, and maybe when the tide turns she'll be going down to see would he be floating from the east

(*They put the ladder against the gable of the chimney; CATHLEEN goes up a few steps and hides the bundle in the turf-loft. MAURYA comes from the inner room.*)

MAURYA (*looking up at CATHLEEN and speaking querulously*). Is n't it turf enough you have for this day and evening?

CATHLEEN. There's a cake baking at the fire for a short space (*throwing down the turf*) and Bartley will want it when the tide turns if he goes to Connemara.

(*NORA picks up the turf and puts it round the pot-oven.*)

MAURYA (*sitting down on a stool at the fire*). He won't go this day with the wind rising from the south and west. He won't go this day, for the young priest will stop him surely.

NORA. He'll not stop him, mother, and I heard Eamon Simon and Stephen Pheety and Colum Shawn saying he would go

MAURYA. Where is he itself?

NORA. He went down to see would there be another boat sailing in the week, and I'm thinking it won't be long till he's here now, for the tide's turning at the green head, and the hooker's tacking from the east.

CATHLEEN. I hear someone passing the big stones.

NORA (*looking out*). He's coming now, and he in a hurry.

BARTLEY (*comes in and looks round the room, speaking sadly and quietly*). Where is the bit of new rope, Cathleen, was bought in Connemara?

CATHLEEN (*coming down*). Give it to him, Nora; it's on a nail by the white boards. I hung it up this morning, for the pig with the black feet was eating it.

NORA (*giving him a rope*). Is that it, Bartley?

MAURYA You'd do right to leave that rope, Bartley,

hanging by the boards. (*BARTLEY takes the rope.*) It will be wanting in this place, I'm telling you, if Michael is washed up to-morrow morning, or the next morning, or any morning in the week, for it's a deep grave we'll make him by the grace of God.

BARTLEY (beginning to work with the rope). I've no halter the way I can ride down on the mare, and I must go now quickly. This is the one boat going for two weeks or beyond it, and the fair will be a good fair for horses, I heard them saying below.

MAURYA. It's a hard thing they'll be saying below if the body is washed up and there's no man in it to make the coffin, and I after giving a big price for the finest white boards you'd find in Connemara.

(*She looks round at the boards.*)

BARTLEY. How would it be washed up, and we after looking each day for nine days, and a strong wind blowing a while back from the west and south?

MAURYA. If it was n't found itself, that wind is raising the sea, and there was a star up against the moon, and it rising in the night. If it was a hundred horses, or a thousand horses you had itself, what is the price of a thousand horses against a son where there is one son only?

BARTLEY (working at the halter, to CATHLEEN). Let you go down each day, and see the sheep are n't jumping in on the rye, and if the jobber comes you can sell the pig with the black feet if there is a good price going.

MAURYA. How would the like of her get a good price for a pig?

BARTLEY (to CATHLEEN) If the west wind holds with the last bit of the moon let you and Nora get up weed enough for another cock for the kelp. It's hard set we'll be from this day with no one in it but one man to work.

MAURYA. It's hard set we'll be surely the day you're

drownd'd with the rest. What way will I live and the girls with me, and I an old woman looking for the grave?

(BARTLEY *lays down the halter, takes off his old coat, and puts on a newer one of the same flannel.*)

BARTLEY (*to NORA*). Is she coming to the pier?

NORA (*looking out*). She's passing the green head and letting fall her sails.

BARTLEY (*getting his purse and tobacco*). I'll have half an hour to go down, and you'll see me coming again in two days, or in three days, or maybe in four days if the wind is bad.

MAURYA (*turning round to the fire, and putting her shawl over her head*). Is n't it a hard and cruel man won't hear a word from an old woman, and she holding him from the sea?

CATHLEEN. It's the life of a young man to be going on the sea, and who would listen to an old woman with one thing and she saying it over?

BARTLEY (*taking the halter*) I must go now quickly. I'll ride down on the red mare, and the gray pony'll run behind me. The blessing of God on you.

(*He goes out.*)

MAURYA (*crying out as he is in the door*). He's gone now, God spare us, and we'll not see him again. He's gone now, and when the black night is falling I'll have no son left me in the world.

CATHLEEN. Why would n't you give him your blessing and he looking round in the door? Isn't it sorrow enough is on everyone in this house without your sending him out with an unlucky word behind him, and a hard word in his ear?

(MAURYA *takes up the tongs and begins raking the fire aimlessly without looking round*)

NORA (*turning towards her*). You're taking away the turf from the cake

CATHLEEN (*crying out*) The Son of God forgive us, Nora, we're after forgetting his bit of bread.

(*She comes over to the fire*)

NORA. And it's destroyed he'll be going till dark night, and he after eating nothing since the sun went up

CATHLEEN (*turning the cake out of the oven*). It's destroyed he'll be, surely There's no sense left on any person in a house where an old woman will be talking for ever.

(MAURYA *sways herself on her stool*.)

CATHLEEN (*cutting off some of the bread and rolling it in a cloth, to MAURYA*). Let you go down now to the spring well and give him this and he passing You'll see him then and the dark word will be broken, and you can say, "God speed you," the way he'll be easy in his mind.

MAURYA (*taking the bread*). Will I be in it as soon as himself?

CATHLEEN. If you go now quickly.

MAURYA (*standing up unsteadily*). It's hard set I am to walk.

CATHLEEN (*looking at her anxiously*). Give her the stick, Nora, or maybe she'll slip on the big stones.

NORA. What stick?

CATHLEEN. The stick Michael brought from Connemara.

MAURYA (*taking a stick NORA gives her*). In the big world the old people do be leaving things after them for their sons and children, but in this place it is the young men do be leaving things behind for them that do be old.

(*She goes out slowly. NORA goes over to the ladder*.)

CATHLEEN Wait, Nora, maybe she'd turn back quickly. She's that sorry, God help her, you would n't know the thing she'd do.

NORA. Is she gone round by the bush?

CATHLEEN (*looking out*). She's gone now. Throw it down quickly, for the Lord knows when she'll be out of it again.

NORA (*getting the bundle from the loft*). The young priest said he'd be passing to-morrow, and we might go down and speak to him below if it's Michael's they are surely.

CATHLEEN (*taking the bundle*). Did he say what way they were found?

NORA (*coming down*) "There were two men," says he, "and they rowing round with poteen before the cocks crowed, and the oar of one of them caught the body, and they passing the black cliffs of the north "

CATHLEEN (*trying to open the bundle*). Give me a knife, Nora; the string's perished with the salt water, and there's a black knot on it you would n't loosen in a week.

NORA (*giving her a knife*). I've heard tell it was a long way to Donegal.

CATHLEEN (*cutting the string*) It is surely. There was a man in here a while ago — the man sold us that knife — and he said if you set off walking from the rocks beyond, it would be seven days you'd be in Donegal.

NORA. And what time would a man take, and he floating?

(CATHLEEN opens the bundle and takes out a bit of a stocking They look at them eagerly)

CATHLEEN (*in a low voice*). The Lord spare us, Nora! is n't it a queer hard thing to say if it's his they are surely?

NORA I'll get his shirt off the hook the way we can put the one flannel on the other. (*She looks through some clothes hanging in the corner*) It's not with them, Cathleen, and where will it be?

CATHLEEN. I'm thinking Bartley put it on him in the morning, for his own shirt was heavy with the salt in it. (*Pointing to the corner*) There's a bit of a sleeve was of the same stuff. Give me that and it will do.

(NORA brings it to her and they compare the flannel)

CATHLEEN. It's the same stuff, Nora; but if it is itself, are n't there great rolls of it in the shops of Galway, and

is n't it many another man may have a shirt of it as well as Michael himself?

NORA (*who has taken up the stocking and counted the stitches, crying out*). It's Michael, Cathleen, it's Michael; God spare his soul, and what will herself say when she hears this story, and Bartley on the sea?

CATHLEEN (*taking the stocking*). It's a plain stocking

NORA. It's the second one of the third pair I knitted, and I put up three score stitches, and I dropped four of them.

CATHLEEN (*counts the stitches*). It's that number is in it. (*Crying out*) Ah, Nora, is n't it a bitter thing to think of him floating that way to the far north, and no one to keen him but the black hags that do be flying on the sea?

NORA (*swinging herself round, and throwing out her arms on the clothes*). And is n't it a pitiful thing when there is nothing left of a man who was a great rower and fisher, but a bit of an old shirt and a plain stocking?

CATHLEEN (*after an instant*). Tell me is herself coming, Nora? I hear a little sound on the path.

NORA (*looking out*). She is, Cathleen. She's coming up to the door.

CATHLEEN. Put these things away before she'll come in. Maybe it's easier she'll be after giving her blessing to Bartley, and we won't let on we've heard anything the time he's on the sea.

NORA (*helping CATHLEEN to close the bundle*). We'll put them here in the corner

(*They put them into a hole in the chimney corner. CATHLEEN goes back to the spinning wheel.*)

NORA. Will she see it was crying I was?

CATHLEEN. Keep your back to the door the way the light'll not be on you.

(*NORA sits down at the chimney corner, with her back to the door MAURYA comes in very slowly, without looking at the girls, and goes over to her stool at the other*

side of the fire. The cloth with the bread is still in her hand. The girls look at each other, and NORA points to the bundle of bread.)

CATHLEEN (*after spinning for a moment*) You did n't give him his bit of bread?

(MAURYA begins to keen softly, without turning round.)

CATHLEEN. Did you see him riding down?

(MAURYA goes on keening.)

CATHLEEN (*a little impatiently*). God forgive you; is n't it a better thing to raise your voice and tell what you seen, than to be making lamentation for a thing that's done? Did you see Bartley, I'm saying to you.

MAURYA (*with a weak voice*). My heart 's broken from this day.

CATHLEEN (*as before*). Did you see Bartley?

MAURYA. I seen the fearfulest thing.

CATHLEEN (*leaves her wheel and looks out*). God forgive you; he 's riding the mare now over the green head, and the gray pony behind him.

MAURYA (*starts, so that her shawl falls back from her head and shows her white tossed hair; with a frightened voice*). The gray pony behind him.

CATHLEEN (*coming to the fire*). What is it ails you, at all?

MAURYA (*speaking very slowly*). I 've seen the fearfulest thing any person has seen, since the day Bride Dara seen the dead man with the child in his arms.

CATHLEEN AND NORA. Uah.

(*They crouch down in front of the old woman at the fire*.)

NORA. Tell us what it is you seen

MAURYA. I went down to the spring-well, and I stood there saying a prayer to myself. Then Bartley came along, and he riding on the red mare with the gray pony behind him. (*She puts up her hands, as if to hide something from her eyes.*) The Son of God spare us, Nora!

CATHLEEN What is it you seen?

MAURYA. I seen Michael himself.

CATHLEEN (*speaking softly*) You did not, mother; it wasn't Michael you seen, for his body is after being found in the far north, and he's got a clean burial by the grace of God.

MAURYA (*a little defiantly*) I'm after seeing him this day, and he riding and galloping. Bartley came first on the red mare, and I tried to say "God speed you," but something choked the words in my throat. He went by quickly, and, "The blessing of God on you," says he, and I could say nothing. I looked up then, and I crying, at the gray pony, and there was Michael upon it — with fine clothes on him, and new shoes on his feet.

CATHLEEN (*begins to keen*). It's destroyed we are from this day. It's destroyed, surely

NORA. Did n't the young priest say the Almighty God would n't leave her destitute with no son living?

MAURYA (*in a low voice, but clearly*). It's little the like of him knows of the sea. . . . Bartley will be lost now, and let you call in Eamon and make me a good coffin out of the white boards, for I won't live after them. I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house — six fine men, though it was a hard birth I had with every one of them and they coming to the world — and some of them were found and some of them were not found, but they're gone now, the lot of them. . . . There were Stephen, and Shawn, were lost in the great wind, and found after in the Bay of Gregory of the Golden Mouth, and carried up the two of them on the one plank, and in by that door.

(*She pauses for a moment, the girls start as if they heard something through the door that is half-open behind them.*)

NORA (*in a whisper*). Did you hear that, Cathleen? Did you hear a noise in the northeast?

CATHLEEN (*in a whisper*) There's someone after crying out by the seashore.

MAURYA (*continues without hearing anything*) There was Sheamus and his father, and his own father again, were lost in a dark night, and not a stick or sign was seen of them when the sun went up. There was Patch after was drowned out of a curagh that turned over. I was sitting here with Bartley, and he a baby, lying on my two knees, and I seen two women, and three women, and four women coming in, and they crossing themselves, and not saying a word. I looked out then, and there were men coming after them, and they holding a thing in the half of a red sail, and water dripping out of it — it was a dry day, Nora — and leaving a track to the door.

(*She pauses again with her hand stretched out towards the door. It opens softly and old women begin to come in, crossing themselves on the threshold, and kneeling down in front of the stage with red petticoats over their heads.*)

MAURYA (*half in a dream, to Cathleen*). Is it Patch, or Michael, or what is it at all?

CATHLEEN. Michael is after being found in the far north, and when he is found there how could he be here in this place?

MAURYA There does be a power of young men floating round in the sea, and what way would they know if it was Michael they had, or another man like him, for when a man is nine days in the sea, and the wind blowing, it's hard set his own mother would be to say what man was it.

CATHLEEN. It's Michael, God spare him, for they're after sending us a bit of his clothes from the far north.

(*She reaches out and hands MAURYA the clothes that be-*

longed to MICHAEL. MAURYA stands up slowly, and takes them in her hands. NORA looks out)

NORA. They're carrying a thing among them and there's water dripping out of it and leaving a track by the big stones.

CATHLEEN (*in a whisper to the women who have come in*). Is it Bartley it is?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. It is surely, God rest his soul.

(*Two younger women come in and pull out the table.*

Then men carry in the body of BARTLEY, laid on a plank, with a bit of a sail over it, and lay it on the table)

CATHLEEN (*to the women, as they are doing so*). What way was he drowned?

ONE OF THE WOMEN. The gray pony knocked him into the sea, and he was washed out where there is a great surf on the white rocks.

(*MAURYA has gone over and knelt down at the head of the table. The women are keening softly and swaying themselves with a slow movement. CATHLEEN and NORA kneel at the other end of the table. The men kneel near the door*.)

MAURYA (*raising her head and speaking as if she did not see the people around her*). They're all gone now, and there is n't anything more the sea can do to me. . . . I'll have no call now to be up crying and praying when the wind breaks from the south, and you can hear the surf is in the east, and the surf is in the west, making a great stir with the two noises, and they hitting one on the other. I'll have no call now to be going down and getting Holy Water in the dark nights after Samhain, and I won't care what way the sea is when the other women will be keening. (*To NORA*) Give me the Holy Water, Nora; there's a small sup still on the dresser.

(*NORA gives it to her*.)

MAURYA (*drops MICHAEL's clothes across BARTLEY'S feet, and sprinkles the Holy Water over him*). It is n't that I have n't prayed for you, Bartley, to the Almighty God. It is n't that I have n't said prayers in the dark night till you would n't know what I'd be saying; but it's a great rest I'll have now, and it's time surely. It's a great rest I'll have now, and great sleeping in the long nights after Samhain, if it's only a bit of wet flour we do have to eat, and maybe a fish that would be stinking

(*She kneels down again, crossing herself, and saying prayers under her breath.*)

CATHLEEN (*to an old man*) Maybe yourself and Eamon would make a coffin when the sun rises. We have fine white boards herself bought, God help her, thinking Michael would be found, and I have a new cake you can eat while you'll be working.

THE OLD MAN (*looking at the boards*). Are there nails with them?

CATHLEEN There are not, Colum, we did n't think of the nails.

ANOTHER MAN. It's a great wonder she would n't think of the nails, and all the coffins she's seen made already.

CATHLEEN. It's getting old she is, and broken.

(*MAURYA stands up again very slowly and spreads out the pieces of MICHAEL's clothes beside the body, sprinkling them with the last of the Holy Water*)

NORA (*in a whisper to CATHLEEN*). She's quiet now and easy; but the day Michael was drowned you could hear her crying out from this to the spring-well. It's fonder she was of Michael, and would anyone have thought that?

CATHLEEN (*slowly and clearly*). An old woman will be soon tired with anything she will do, and isn't it nine days herself is after crying and keening, and making great sorrow in the house?

MAURYA (*puts the empty cup mouth downwards on the table, and lays her hands together on BARTLEY's feet*). They're all together this time, and the end is come. May the Almighty God have mercy on Bartley's soul, and on Michael's soul, and on the souls of Sheamus and Patch, and Stephen and Shawn (*bending her head*); and may He have mercy on my soul, Nora, and on the soul of everyone is left living in the world.

(*She pauses, and the keen rises a little more loudly from the women, then sinks away*)

MAURYA (*continuing*). Michael has a clean burial in the far north, by the grace of the Almighty God. Bartley will have a fine coffin out of the white boards, and a deep grave surely. What more can we want than that? No man at all can be living for ever, and we must be satisfied.

(*She kneels down again, and the curtain falls slowly*).

THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE¹

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

CHARACTERS

MAURTEEN BRUIN

BRIDGET BRUIN, his wife

SHAWN BRUIN, their son

MAIRE BRUIN, wife of Shawn

FATHER HART

A FAËRY CHILD

SCENE: In the Barony of Kilmacowan, in the county of Sligo, at a remote time.

SETTING. *a room with a hearth on the floor in the middle of a deep alcove on the right. There are benches in the alcove, and a table; a crucifix on the wall. The alcove is full of a glow of light from the fire. There is an open door facing the audience, to the left, and to the left of this a bench. Through the door one can see the forest. It is night, but the moon or a late sunset glimmers through the trees, and carries the eye far off into a vague, mysterious world.* MAURTEEN BRUIN, SHAWN BRUIN, and BRIDGET BRUIN *sit in the alcove at the table, or about the fire. They are dressed in the costume of some remote time, and near them sits an old priest, FATHER HART, in the garb of a friar. There is food and drink upon the table.*

¹ Reprinted by arrangement with Mr. Yeats and the Macmillan Company, New York, publishers of Mr. Yeats's Collected Works (1912)

MAIRE BRUIN stands by the door, reading a yellow manuscript. If she looks up, she can see through the door into the wood.

BRIDGET BRUIN

Because I bade her go and feed the calves,
She took that old book down out of the thatch
And has been doubled over it all day.
We should be deafened by her groans and moans
Had she to work as some do, Father Hart,
Get up at dawn like me, and mend and scour;
Or ride abroad in the boisterous night like you,
The pyx and blessed bread under your arm.

SHAWN BRUIN

You are too cross.

BRIDGET BRUIN

The young side with the young.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

She quarrels with my wife a bit at times,
And is too deep just now in the old book!
But do not blame her greatly; she will grow
As quiet as a puff-ball in a tree
When but the moons of marriage dawn and die
For half a score of times.

FATHER HART

Their hearts are wild
As be the hearts of birds, till children come.

BRIDGET BRUIN

She would not mind the griddle, milk the cow,
Or even lay the knives and spread the cloth.

FATHER HART

I never saw her read a book before;
What may it be?

MAURTEEN BRUIN

I do not rightly know;
It has been in the thatch for fifty years
My father told me my grandfather wrote it,
Killed a red heifer and bound it with the hide.
But draw your chair this way — supper is spread,
And little good he got out of the book,
Because it filled his house with roaming bards,
And roaming ballad-makers and the like,
And wasted all his goods. — Here is the wine:
The griddle bread 's beside you, Father Hart.
Colleen, what have you got there in the book
That you must leave the bread to cool? Had I,
Or had my father, read or written books
There were no stocking stuffed with golden guineas
To come, when I am dead, to Shawn and you.

FATHER HART

You should not fill your head with foolish dreams.
What are you reading?

MAIRE BRUIN

How a Princess Edane,
A daughter of a King of Ireland, heard
A voice singing on a May Eve like this,
And followed, half awake and half asleep,
Until she came into the Land of Faëry,
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue;
And she is still there, busied with a dance,

Deep in the dewy shadow of a wood,
Or where stars walk upon a mountain-top.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Persuade the colleen to put by the book
My grandfather would mutter just such things,
And he was no judge of a dog or horse,
And any idle boy could blarney him:
Just speak your mind.

FATHER HART

Put it away, my colleen.

God spreads the heavens above us like great wings,
And gives a little round of deeds and days,
And then come the wrecked angels and set snares,
And bait them with light hopes and heavy dreams,
Until the heart is puffed with pride and goes,
Half shuddering and half joyous, from God's peace.
And it was some wrecked angel, blind from tears,
Who flattered Edane's heart with merry words.
My colleen, I have seen some other girls
Restless and ill at ease, but years went by
And they grew like their neighbours and were glad
In minding children, working at the churn,
And gossiping of weddings and of wakes;
For life moves out of a red flare of dreams
Into a common light of common hours,
Until old age bring the red flare again.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

That's true — but she's too young to know it's true.

BRIDGET BRUIN

She's old enough to know that it is wrong
To mope and idle.

SHAWN BRUIN

I've little blame for her;
And mother's tongue were harder still to bear,
But for her fancies this is May Eve too,
When the good people post about the world,
And surely one may think of them to-night.
Maire, have you the primroses to fling
Before the door to make a golden path
For them to bring good luck into the house?
Remember, they may steal new-married brides
After the fall of twilight on May Eve.

(MAIRE BRUIN goes over to the window and takes flowers from the bowl and strews them outside the door.)

FATHER HART

You do well, daughter, because God permits
Great power to the good people on May Eve.

SHAWN BRUIN

They can work all their will with primroses;
Change them to golden money, or little flames
To burn up those who do them any wrong.

MAIRE BRUIN (*in a dreamy voice*)

I had no sooner flung them by the door
Than the wind cried and hurried them away;
And then a child came running in the wind
And caught them in her hands and fondled them:
Her dress was green her hair was of red gold;
Her face was pale as water before dawn.

FATHER HART

Whose child can this be?

MAURTEEN BRUIN

No one's child at all.

She often dreams that someone has gone by
When there was nothing but a puff of wind.

MAIRE BRUIN

They will not bring good luck into the house,
For they have blown the primroses away,
Yet I am glad that I was courteous to them,
For are not they, likewise, children of God?

FATHER HART

Colleen, they are the children of the fiend,
And they have power until the end of Time,
When God shall fight with them a great pitched battle
And hack them into pieces.

MAIRE BRUIN

He will smile,
Father, perhaps, and open His great door,
And call the pretty and kind into His house

FATHER HART

Did but the lawless angels see that door,
They would fall, slain by everlasting peace,
And when such angels knock upon our doors
Who goes with them must drive through the same storm.

(A knock at the door. MAIRE BRUIN opens it and then goes to the dresser and fills a porringer with milk and hands it through the door, and takes it back empty and closes the door.)

MAIRE BRUIN

A little queer old woman cloaked in green,
Who came to beg a porringer of milk.

BRIDGET BRUIN

The good people go asking milk and fire
 Upon May Eve — Woe on the house that gives,
 For they have power upon it for a year.
 I knew you would bring evil on the house.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Who was she?

MAIRE BRUIN

Both the tongue and face were strange.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Some strangers came last week to Clover Hill;
 She must be one of them.

BRIDGET BRUIN
 I am afraid.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

The priest will keep all harm out of the house.

FATHER HART

The cross will keep all harm out of the house
 While it hangs there.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Come, sit beside me, colleen,
 And put away your dreams of discontent,
 For I would have you light up my last days
 Like the good glow of the turf, and when I die
 I will make you the wealthiest hereabout:
 For hid away where nobody can find
 I have a stocking full of yellow guineas.

BRIDGET BRUIN

You are the fool of every pretty face,
And I must pinch and pare that my son's wife
May have all kinds of ribbons for her head.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Do not be cross, she is a right good girl!
The butter is by your elbow, Father Hart.
My colleen, have not Fate and Time and Change
Done well for me and for old Bridget there?
We have a hundred acres of good land,
And sit beside each other at the fire,
The wise priest of our parish to our right,
And you and our dear son to left of us
To sit beside the board and drink good wine
And watch the turf smoke coiling from the fire
And feel content and wisdom in your heart,
This is the best of life; when we are young
We long to tread a way none trod before,
But find the excellent old way through love
And through the care of children to the hour
For bidding Fate and Time and Change good-bye

(A knock at the door. MAIRE BRUIN opens it and then takes a sod of turf out of the hearth in the tongs and goes out through the door. SHAWN follows her and meets her coming in)

SHAWN BRUIN

What is it draws you to the chill o' the wood?
There is a light among the stems of the trees
That makes one shiver.

MAIRE BRUIN

A little queer old man
Made me a sign to show he wanted fire
To light his pipe.

BRIDGET BRUIN

You 've given milk and fire,
Upon the unluckiest night of the year, and brought,
For all you know, evil upon the house.
Before you married you were idle and fine,
And went about with ribbons on your head;
And now — no, father, I will speak my mind,
She is not a fitting wife for any man —

SHAWN BRUIN

Be quiet, mother!

MAURTEEN BRUIN

You are much too cross!

MAIRE BRUIN

What do I care if I have given this house,
Where I must hear all day a bitter tongue,
Into the power of faeries!

BRIDGET BRUIN

You know well
How calling the good people by that name
Or talking of them over much at all
May bring all kinds of evil on the house.

MAIRE BRUIN

Come, faeries, take me out of this dull house!
Let me have all the freedom I have lost;
Work when I will and idle when I will!
Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,
For I would ride with you upon the wind,
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
And dance upon the mountains like a flame!

FATHER HART

You cannot know the meaning of your words.

MAIRE BRUIN

Father, I am right weary of four tongues:
 A tongue that is too crafty and too wise,
 A tongue that is too godly and too grave,
 A tongue that is more bitter than the tide,
 And a kind tongue too full of drowsy love,
 Of drowsy love and my captivity.

(SHAWN BRUIN comes over to her and leads her to the settle.)

SHAWN BRUIN

Do not blame me I often lie awake
 Thinking that all things trouble your bright head —
 How beautiful it is — such broad pale brows
 Under a cloudy blossoming of hair!
 Sit down beside me here — these are too old,
 And have forgotten they were ever young.

MAIRE BRUIN

Oh, you are the great door-post of this house,
 And I, the red nasturtium, climbing up.

(She takes SHAWN'S hand, but looks shyly at the priest and lets it go.)

FATHER HART

Good daughter, take his hand — by love alone
 God binds us to Himself and to the hearth
 And shuts us from the waste beyond His peace,
 From maddening freedom and bewildering light.

SHAWN BRUIN

Would that the world were mine to give it you
 With every quiet hearth and barren waste,

The maddening freedom of its woods and tides,
And the bewildering light upon its hills.

MAIRE BRUIN

Then I would take and break it in my hands
To see you smile watching it crumble away.

SHAWN BRUIN

Then I would mould a world of fire and dew
With no one bitter, grave, or over wise,
And nothing marred or old to do you wrong,
And crowd the enraptured quiet of the sky
With candles burning to your lonely face.

MAIRE BRUIN

Your looks are all the candles that I need.

SHAWN BRUIN

Once a fly dancing in a beam of the sun,
Or the light wind blowing out of the dawn,
Could fill your heart with dreams none other knew,
But now the indissoluble sacrament
Has mixed your heart that was most proud and cold
With my warm heart for ever; and sun and moon
Must fade and heaven be rolled up like a scroll;
But your white spirit still walk by my spirit.

(A VOICE *sings in the distance.*)

MAIRE BRUIN

Did you hear something call? Oh, guard me close,
Because I have said wicked things to-night;
And seen a pale-faced child with red-gold hair,
And longed to dance upon the winds with her.

A Voice (*close to the door*)

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
 The wind blows over the lonely of heart
 And the lonely of heart is withered away,
 While the faeries dance in a place apart,
 Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
 Tossing their milk-white arms in the air,
 For they hear the wind laugh, and murmur and sing
 Of a land where even the old are fair,
 And even the wise are merry of tongue,
 But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
 "When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,
 The lonely of heart is withered away!"

MAURTEEN BRUIN

I am right happy, and would make all else
 Be happy too. I hear a child outside,
 And will go bring her in out of the cold.

(*He opens the door A CHILD dressed in pale green and with red-gold hair comes into the house.*)

THE CHILD

I tire of winds and waters and pale lights!

MAURTEEN BRUIN

You are most welcome It is cold out there,
 Who would think to face such cold on a May Eve?

THE CHILD

And when I tire of this warm little house
 There is one here who must away, away,
 To where the woods, the stars, and the white streams
 Are holding a continual festival

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Oh, listen to her dreamy and strange talk.
 Come to the fire

THE CHILD

I will sit upon your knee,
For I have run from where the winds are born,
And long to rest my feet a little while.

(*She sits upon his knee.*)

BRIDGET BRUIN

How pretty you are!

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Your hair is wet with dew!

BRIDGET BRUIN

I will warm your chilly feet.

(*She takes the child's feet in her hands.*)

MAURTEEN BRUIN

You must have come
A long, long way, for I have never seen
Your pretty face, and must be tired and hungry;
Here is some bread and wine.

THE CHILD

The wine is bitter.

Old mother, have you no sweet food for me?

BRIDGET BRUIN

I have some honey!

(*She goes into the next room.*)

MAURTEEN BRUIN

You are a dear child;
The mother was quite cross before you came.

(*BRIDGET returns with the honey, and goes to the dresser and fills a porringer with milk.*)

BRIDGET BRUIN

She is the child of gentle people; look
 At her white hands and at her pretty dress.
 I 've brought you some new milk, but wait awhile,
 And I will put it by the fire to warm,
 For things well fitted for poor folk like us
 Would never please a high-born child like you.

THE CHILD

Old mother, my old mother, the green dawn
 Brightens above while you blow up the fire;
 And evening finds you spreading the white cloth.
 The young may lie in bed and dream and hope,
 But you work on because your heart is old.

BRIDGET BRUIN

The young are idle.

THE CHILD

Old father, you are wise
 And all the years have gathered in your heart
 To whisper of the wonders that are gone.
 The young must sigh through many a dream and hope,
 But you are wise because your heart is old.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Oh, who would think to find so young a child
 Loving old age and wisdom?

(BRIDGET gives her more bread and honey.)

THE CHILD

No more, mother.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

What a small bite! The milk is ready now;
 What a small sip!

THE CHILD

Put on my shoes, old mother,
 For I would like to dance now I have eaten.
 The reeds are dancing by Coolaney lake,
 And I would like to dance until the reeds
 And the white waves have danced themselves to sleep.

BRIDGET

(*Having put on her shoes, she gets off the old man's knees and is about to dance, but suddenly sees the crucifix and shrieks and covers her eyes*)

What is that ugly thing on the black cross?

FATHER HART

You cannot know how naughty your words are!
 That is our Blessed Lord!

THE CHILD

Hide it away!

BRIDGET BRUIN

I have begun to be afraid, again!

THE CHILD

Hide it away!

MAURTEEN BRUIN

That would be wickedness!

BRIDGET BRUIN

That would be sacrilege!

THE CHILD

The tortured thing!

Hide it away!

MAURTEEN BRUIN

Her parents are to blame.

FATHER HART

That is the image of the Son of God.

(THE CHILD *puts her arm around his neck and kisses him.*)

THE CHILD

Hide it away! Hide it away!

MAURTEEN BRUIN

No! no!

FATHER HART

Because you are so young and little a child
I will go take it down.

THE CHILD

Hide it away,

And cover it out of sight and out of mind.

(FATHER HART *takes it down and carries it towards the inner room.*)

FATHER HART

Since you have come into this barony
I will instruct you in our blessed faith:
Being a clever child you will soon learn.

(*To the others*)

We must be tender with all budding things.

Our Maker let no thought of Calvary

Trouble the morning stars in their first song.

(*Puts the crucifix in the inner room.*)

THE CHILD

Here is level ground for dancing. I will dance.

The wind is blowing on the waving reeds,

The wind is blowing on the heart of man.

(*She dances, swaying about like the reeds.*)

MAIRE (*to SHAWN BRUIN*)

Just now when she came near I thought I heard
Other small steps beating upon the floor,
And a faint music blowing in the wind,
Invisible pipes giving her feet the time.

SHAWN BRUIN

I heard no step but hers.

MAIRE BRUIN

Look to the bolt!

Because the unholy powers are abroad.

MAURTEEN BRUIN (*to THE CHILD*)

Come over here, and if you promise me
Not to talk wickedly of holy things
I will give you something.

THE CHILD

Bring it me, old father!

(MAURTEEN BRUIN *goes into the next room.*)

FATHER HART

I will have queen cakes when you come to me!

(MAURTEEN BRUIN *returns and lays a piece of money on the table.* THE CHILD *makes a gesture of refusal.*)

MAURTEEN BRUIN

It will buy lots of toys; see how it glitters!

THE CHILD

Come, tell me, do you love me?

MAURTEEN BRUIN

I love you!

THE CHILD

Ah! but you love this fireside!

FATHER HART

I love you.

When the Almighty puts so great a share
Of His own ageless youth into a creature,
To look is but to love.

THE CHILD

But you love Him above.

BRIDGET BRUIN

She is blaspheming.

THE CHILD (*to MAIRE*)

And do you love me?

MAIRE BRUIN

I — I do not know.

THE CHILD

You love that great tall fellow over there:
Yet I could make you ride upon the winds,
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
And dance upon the mountains like a flame!

MAIRE BRUIN

Queen of the Angels and kind Saints, defend us!
Some dreadful fate has fallen: a while ago
The wind cried out and took the primroses,
And she ran by me laughing in the wind,
And I gave milk and fire, and she came in
And made you hide the blessed crucifix.

FATHER HART

You fear because of her wild, pretty prattle;
She knows no better.

(*To THE CHILD*)

Child, how old are you?

THE CHILD

When winter sleep is abroad my hair grows thin,
My feet unsteady. When the leaves awaken
My mother carries me in her golden arms.
I will soon put on my womanhood and marry
The spirits of wood and water, but who can tell
When I was born for the first time? I think
I am much older than the eagle cock
That blinks and blinks on Ballygawley Hill,
And he is the oldest thing under the moon.

FATHER HART

She is of the faëry people.

THE CHILD

I am Brig's daughter.

I sent my messengers for milk and fire,
And then I heard one call to me and came.

(*They all except SHAWN and MAIRE BRUIN gather behind the priest for protection.*)

SHAWN (*rising*)

Though you have made all these obedient,
You have not charmed my sight, and won from me
A wish or gift to make you powerful;
I'll turn you from the house.

FATHER HART

No, I will face her.

THE CHILD

Because you took away the crucifix
 I am so mighty that there's none can pass
 Unless I will it, where my feet have danced
 Or where I've twirled my finger tops.

(SHAWN tries to approach her and cannot.)

MAURTEEN

Look, look!

There something stops him — look how he moves his hands
 As though he rubbed them on a wall of glass.

FATHER HART

I will confront this mighty spirit alone.

(They cling to him and hold him back.)

THE CHILD (*while she strews primroses*)

No one whose heart is heavy with human tears
 Can cross these little cressets of the wood.

FATHER HART

Be not afraid, the Father is with us,
 And all the nine angelic hierarchies,
 The Holy Martyrs and the Innocents,
 The adoring Magi in their coats of mail,
 And He who died and rose on the third day,
 And Mary with her seven times wounded heart.

(THE CHILD ceases strewing the primroses, and kneels
 upon the settle beside MAIRE and puts her arms about
 her neck.)

Cry, daughter, to the Angels and the Saints.

THE CHILD

You shall go with me, newly married bride,
And gaze upon a merrier multitude;
White-armed Nuala, Ængus of the birds,
Feacra of the hurtling foam, and him
Who is the ruler of the Western Host,
Finvarra, and their Land of Heart's Desire,
Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,
But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song.
I kiss you and the world begins to fade.

FATHER HART

Daughter, I call you unto home and love!

THE CHILD

Stay, and come with me, newly married bride,
For, if you hear him, you grow like the rest:
Bear children, cook, be mindful of the churn,
And wrangle over butter, fowl, and eggs,
And sit at last there, old and bitter of tongue,
Watching the white stars war upon your hopes.

SHAWN

Awake out of that trance, and cover up
Your eyes and ears.

FATHER HART

She must both look and listen,
For only the soul's choice can save her now.
Daughter, I point you out the way to heaven.

THE CHILD

But I can lead you, newly married bride,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,

Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
 Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue,
 And where kind tongues bring no captivity;
 For we are only true to the far lights
 We follow singing, over valley and hill.

FATHER HART

By the dear name of the one crucified,
 I bid you, Maire Bruin, come to me.

THE CHILD

I keep you in the name of your own heart!

(She leaves the settle, and stooping takes up a mass of primroses and kisses them)

We have great power to-night, dear golden folk,
 For he took down and hid the crucifix.
 And my invisible brethren fill the house;
 I hear their footsteps going up and down.
 Oh, they shall soon rule all the hearts of men
 And own all lands; last night they merrily danced
 About his chapel belfry! *(To MAIRE)* Come away,
 I hear my brethren bidding us away!

FATHER HART

I will go fetch the crucifix again.

(They hang about him in terror and prevent him from moving.)

BRIDGET BRUIN

The enchanted flowers will kill us if you go.

MAURTEEN BRUIN

They turn the flowers to little twisted flames.

SHAWN BRUIN

The little twisted flames burn up the heart.

THE CHILD

I hear them crying, "Newly married bride,
Come to the woods and waters and pale lights."

MAIRE BRUIN

I will go with you.

FATHER HART

She is lost, alas!

THE CHILD (*standing by the door*)

But clinging mortal hope must fall from you:
For we who ride the winds, run on the waves
And dance upon the mountains, are more light
Than dewdrops on the banners of the dawn.

MAIRE BRUIN

Oh, take me with you.

(SHAWN BRUIN *goes over to her.*)

SHAWN BRUIN

Beloved, do not leave me!

Remember when I met you by the well
And took your hand in mine and spoke of love.

MAIRE BRUIN

Dear face! Dear voice!

THE CHILD

Come, newly married bride!

MAIRE BRUIN

I always loved her world — and yet — and yet —

(*Sinks into his arms.*)

THE CHILD (*from the door*)

White bird, white bird, come with me, little bird.

MAIRE BRUIN

She calls to me!

THE CHILD

Come with me, little bird!

MAIRE BRUIN

I can hear songs and dancing!

SHAWN BRUIN

Stay with me!

MAIRE BRUIN

I think that I would stay — and yet — and yet —

THE CHILD

Come, little bird with crest of gold!

MAIRE BRUIN (*very softly*)

And yet —

THE CHILD

Come, little bird with silver feet!

(MAIRE dies, and the child goes.)

SHAWN BRUIN

She is dead!

BRIDGET BRUIN

Come from that image: body and soul are gone.
You have thrown your arms about a drift of leaves
Or bole of an ash tree changed into her image.

FATHER HART

Thus do the spirits of evil snatch their prey
Almost out of the very hand of God;
And day by day their power is more and more,
And men and women leave old paths, for pride
Comes knocking with thin knuckles on the heart.

A VOICE (*singing outside*)

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away
While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;
For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
“When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,
The lonely of heart is withered away.”

(*The song is taken up by many voices, who sing loudly, as if in triumph. Some of the voices seem to come from within the house.*)

[CURTAIN]

THE RIDING TO LITHEND¹

GORDON BOTTOMLEY

CHARACTERS

GUNNAR HAMUNDSSON

HALLGERD LONGCOAT, his wife

RANNVEIG, his mother

ODDNY, ASTRID, and STEINVOR, Hallgerd's housewomen

ORMILD, a woman thrall

BIARTEY, JOFRID, and GUDFINN, beggar-women

GIZUR THE WHITE, MORD VALGARDSSON, THORGRIM THE
EASTERLING, THORBRAND THORLEIKSSON and As-
BRAND his brother, AUNUND, THORGEIR, and HROALD,
riders

MANY OTHER RIDERS AND VOICES OF RIDERS

TIME: Iceland, A.D. 990

SCENE: *The hall of Gunnar's house at Lithend in South Iceland. The portion shewn is set on the stage diagonally, so that to the right one end is seen, while from the rear corner of this, one side runs down almost to the left front.*

The side wall is low and wainscoted with carved paneling on which hang weapons, shields, and coats of mail. In one place a panel slid aside shews a shut bed.

In front of the panelling are two long benches with a carved high-seat between them. Across the end of the hall

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are similar panellings and the seats, with corresponding tables, of the women's dais; behind these and in the gable wall is a high narrow door with a rounded top.

A timber roof slopes down to the side wall and is upheld by cross-beams and two rows of tall pillars which make a rather narrow nave of the centre of the hall. One of these rows runs parallel to the side wall, the pair of pillars before the high-seat being carved and ended with images; of the other row only two pillars are visible at the extreme right.

Within this nave is the space for the hearths; but the only hearth visible is the one near the women's dais. In the roof above it there is a louvre: the fire glows and no smoke rises. The hall is lit everywhere by the firelight.

The rafters over the women's dais carry a floor at the level of the side walls, forming an open loft which is reached by a wide ladder fixed against the wall: a bed is seen in this loft. Low in the roof at intervals are shuttered casements, one being above the loft: all the shutters are closed. Near the fire a large shaggy hound is sleeping; and ORMILD, in the undyed woollen dress of a thrall, is combing wool.

ODDNY stands spinning at the side; near her ASTRID and STEINVOR sit stitching a robe which hangs between them.

ASTRID

Night is a winter long: and evening falls.
Night, night and winter and the heavy snow
Burden our eyes, intrude upon our dreams,
And make of loneliness an earthly place.

ORMILD

This bragging land of freedom that entralls me
Is still the fastness of a secret king

Who treads the dark like snow, of old king Sleep.
He works with night, he has stolen death's tool frost
That makes the breaking wave forget to fall.

ASTRID

Best mind thy comb-pot and forget our king
Before the Longcoat helps at thy awaking . . .
I like not this forsaken quiet house.
The housemen out at harvest in the Isles
Never return. Perhaps they went but now,
Yet I am sore with fearing and expecting
Because they do not come. They will not come.
I like not this forsaken quiet house,
This late last harvest, and night creeping in

ODDNY

I like not dwelling in an outlaw's house.
Snow shall be heavier upon some eyes
Than you can tell of — ay, and unseen earth
Shall keep that snow from filling those poor eyes.
This void house is more void by brooding things
That do not happen, than by absent men.
Sometimes when I awaken in the night
My throbbing ears are mocking me with rumours
Of crackling beams, beams falling, and loud flames.

ASTRID (*pointing to the weapons by the high-seat*)

The bill that Gunnar won in a far sea-fight
Sings inwardly when battle impends; as a harp
Replies to the wind, thus answers it to fierceness,
So tense its nature is and the spell of its welding;
Then trust ye well that while the bill is silent
No danger thickens, for Gunnar dies not singly.

STEINVOR

But women are let forth free when men go burning?

ODDNY

Fire is a hurrying thing, and fire by night
Can see its way better than men see theirs.

ASTRID

The land will not be nobler or more holpen
If Gunnar burns and we go forth unsinged.
Why will he break the atonement that was set?
That wise old Njal who has the second sight
Foretold his death if he should slay twice over
In the same kin, or break the atonement set:
Yet has he done these things and will not care.
Kolskegg, who kept his back in famous fights,
Sailed long ago and far away from us
Because that doom is on him for the slayings;
Yet Gunnar bides although that doom is on him
And he is outlawed by defiance of doom.

STEINVOR

Gunnar has seen his death: he is spoken for.
He would not sail because, when he rode down
Unto the ship, his horse stumbled and threw him,
His face toward the Lithe and his own fields.
Olaf the Peacock bade him be with him
In his new mighty house so carven and bright,
And leave this house to Rannveig and his sons:
He said that would be well, yet never goes.
Is he not thinking death would ride with him?
Did not Njal offer to send his sons,
Skarphedin ugly and brave and Hauskuld with him.

To hold this house with Gunnar, who refused them,
 Saying he would not lead young men to death?
 I tell you Gunnar is done. . . . His fetch is out.

ODDNY

Nay, he's been topmost in so many fights
 That he believes he shall fight on untouched.

STEINVOR

He rides to motes and Things before his foes.
 He has sent his sons harvesting in the Isles.
 He takes deliberate heed of death — to meet it,
 Like those whom Odin needs. He is fey, I tell you —
 And if we are past the foolish ardour of girls
 For heroisms and profitless loftiness
 We shall get gone when bedtime clears the house.
 'T is much to have to be a hero's wife,
 And I shall wonder if Hallgerd cares about it:
 Yet she may kindle to it ere my heart quickens.
 I tell you, women, we have no duty here:
 Let us get gone to-night while there is time,
 And find new harbouring ere the laggard dawn,
 For death is making narrowing passages
 About this hushed and terrifying house.

(RANNVEIG, *an old wimpled woman, enters as if from a door at the unseen end of the hall.*)

ASTRID

He is so great and manly, our master Gunnar,
 There are not many ready to meet his weapons:
 And so there may not be much need of weapons.
 He is so noble and clear, so swift and tender,
 So much of Iceland's fame in foreign places,

That too many love him, too many honour him
 To let him die, lest the most gleaming glory
 Of our grey country should be there put out.

RANNVEIG

Girl, girl, my son has many enemies
 Who will not lose the joy of hurting him.
 This little land is no more than a lair
 That holds too many fiercenesses too straitly,
 And no man will refuse the rapture of killing
 When outlawry has made it cheap and righteous.
 So long as anyone perceives he knows
 A bare place for a weapon on my son
 His hand shall twitch to fit a weapon in.
 Indeed he shall lose nothing but his life
 Because a woman is made so evil fair,
 Wasteful and white and proud in harmful acts.
 I lose two sons when Gunnar's eyes are still,
 For then will Kolskegg never more turn home. . . .
 If Gunnar would but sail, three years would pass,
 Only three years of banishment said the doom —
 So few, so few, for I can last ten years
 With this unshrunken body and steady heart.

(To ORMILD)

Have I sat down in comfort by the fire
 And waited to be told the thing I knew?
 Have any men come home to the young women,
 Thinking old women do not need to hear,
 That you can play at being a bower-maid
 In a long gown although no beasts are foddered?
 Up, lass, and get thy coats about thy knees,
 For we must cleanse the byre and heap the midden
 Before the master knows — or he will go,
 And there is peril for him in every darkness.

ORMILD (tucking up her skirts)

Then are we out of peril in the darkness?
 We should do better to nail up the doors
 Each night and all night long and sleep through it,
 Giving the cattle meat and straw by day.

ODDNY

Ay, and the hungry cattle should sing us to sleep.

(*The others laugh. ORMILD goes out to the left; RANN-VEIG is following her, but pauses at the sound of a voice.*)

HALLGERD (beyond the door of the women's dais)

Dead men have told me I was better than fair,
 And for my face welcomed the danger of me:
 Then am I spent?

(*She enters angrily, looking backward through the doorway*)

Must I shut fast my doors
 And hide myself? Must I wear up the rags
 Of mortal perished beauty and be old?
 Or is there power left upon my mouth
 Like colour, and lilting of ruin in my eyes?
 Am I still rare enough to be your mate?
 Then why must I shame at feasts and bear myself
 In shy ungainly ways, made flushed and conscious
 By squat numb gestures of my shapeless head —
 Ay, and its wagging shadow — clouted up,
 Twice tangled with a bundle of hot hair,
 Like a thick cot-quean's in the settling time?
 There are few women in the Quarter now
 Who do not wear a shapely fine-webbed coif
 Stitched by dark Irish girls in Athcliath
 With golden flies and pearls and glinting things:

Even my daughter lets her big locks show,
 Show and half show, from a hood gentle and close
 That spans her little head like her husband's hand.

GUNNAR (*entering by the same door*)

I like you when you bear your head so high;
 Lift but your heart as high, you could get crowned
 And rule a kingdom of impossible things.
 You would have moon and sun to shine together,
 Snow-flakes to knit for apples on bare boughs,
 Yea, love to thrive upon the terms of hate.
 If I had fared abroad I should have found
 In many countries many marvels for you —
 Though not more comeliness in peopled Romeborg
 And not more haughtiness in Mickligarth
 Nor craftiness in all the isles of the world,
 And only golden coifs in Atheliath:
 Yet you were ardent that I should not sail,
 And when I could not sail you laughed out loud
 And kissed me home. . . .

HALLGERD (*who has been biting her nails*)

And then . . . and doubtless . . . and strangely . . .
 And not more thriftiness in Bergthorsknoll
 Where Njal saves old soft sackcloth for his wife.
 Oh, I must sit with peasants and aged women,
 And keep my head wrapped modestly and seemly.

(*She turns to RANNVEIG.*)

I must be humble — as one who lives on others.

(*She snatches off her wimple, slipping her gold circlet as she does so, and loosens her hair.*)

Unless I may be hooded delicately
 And use the adornment noble women use
 I'll mock you with my flown young widowhood,

Letting my hair go loose past either cheek
 In two bright clouds and drop beyond my bosom,
 Turning the waving ends under my girdle
 As young glad widows do, and as I did
 Ere ever you saw me — ay, and when you found me
 And met me as a king meets a queen
 In the undying light of a summer night
 With burning robes and glances — stirring the heart with
 scarlet.

(She tucks the long ends of her hair under her girdle.)

RANNVEIG

You have cast the head-ring of the nobly nurtured,
 Being eager for a bold uncovered head.
 You are conversant with a widow's fancies. . . .
 Ay, you are ready with your widowhood:
 Two men have had you, chilled their bosoms with you,
 And trusted that they held a precious thing —
 Yet your mean passionate wastefulness poured out
 Their lives for joy of seeing something done with.
 Cannot you wait this time? 'T will not be long.

HALLGERD

I am a hazardous desirable thing,
 A warm unsounded peril, a flashing mischief,
 A divine malice, a disquieting voice:
 Thus I was shapen, and it is my pride
 To nourish all the fires that mingled me.
 I am not long moved, I do not mar my face,
 Though men have sunk in me as in a quicksand.
 Well, death is terrible. Was I not worth it?
 Does not the light change on me as I breathe?
 Could I not take the hearts of generations,
 Walking among their dreams? Oh, I have might,

Although it drives me too and is not my own deed . . .
And Gunnar is great, or he had died long since.
It is my joy that Gunnar stays with me.
Indeed the offence is theirs who hunted him,
His banishment is not just; his wrongs increase,
His honour and his following shall increase
If he is steadfast for his blamelessness

RANNVEIG

Law is not justice, but the sacrifice
Of singular virtues to the dull world's ease of mind,
It measures men by the most vicious men;
It is a bargaining with vanities,
Lest too much right should make men hate each other
And hasten the last battle of all the nations
Gunnar should have kept the atonement set,
For then those men would turn to other quarrels.

GUNNAR

I know not why it is I must be fighting,
For ever fighting, when the slaying of men
Is a more weary and aimless thing to me
Than most men think it . . . and most women too.
There is a woman here who grieves she loves me,
And she too must be fighting me for ever
With her dim ravenous unsated mind. . . .
Ay, Hallgerd, there's that in her which desires
Men to fight on for ever because she lives:
When she took form she did it like a hunger
To nibble earth's lip away until the sea
Poured down the darkness. Why then should I sail
Upon a voyage that can end but here?
She means that I shall fight until I die:

Why must she be put off by whittled years,
When none can die until his time has come?

(*He turns to the hound by the fire.*)

Samm, drowsy friend, dost scent a prey in dreams?
Shake off thy shag of sleep and get to thy watch:
'T is time to be our eyes till the next light.
Out, out to the yard, good Samm.

(*He goes to the left, followed by the hound. In the meantime HALLGERD has seated herself in the high-seat near the sewing women, turning herself away and tugging at a strand of her hair, the end of which she bites.*)

RANNVEIG (*intercepting him*)

Nay, let me take him.

It is not safe — there may be men who hide. . . .

Hallgerd, look up; call Gunnar to you there:

(*HALLGERD is motionless.*)

Lad, she beckons. I say you shall not come.

GUNNAR (*laughing*)

Fierce woman, teach me to be brave in age,
And let us see if it is safe for you.

(*Leads RANNVEIG out, his hand on her shoulder; the hound goes with them.*)

STEINVOR

Mistress, my heart is big with mutinies
For your proud sake: does not your heart mount up?
He is an outlaw now and could not hold you
If you should choose to leave him. Is it not law?
Is it not law that you could loose this marriage —
Nay, that he loosed it shamefully years ago
By a hard blow that bruised your innocent cheek,
Dishonouring you to lesser women and chiefs?
See, it burns up again at the stroke of thought.

Come, leave him, mistress; we will go with you.
 There is no woman in the country now
 Whose name can kindle men as yours can do —
 Ay, many would pile for you the silks he grudges;
 And if you did withdraw your potent presence
 Fire would not spare this house so reverently.

HALLGERD

Am I a wandering flame that sears and passes?
 We must bide here, good Steinvor, and be quiet.
 Without a man a woman cannot rule,
 Nor kill without a knife; and where's the man
 That I shall put before this goodly Gunnar?
 I will not be made less by a less man.
 There is no man so great as my man Gunnar:
 I have set men at him to show forth his might;
 I have planned thefts and breakings of his word
 When my pent heart grew sore with fermentation
 Of malice too long undone, yet could not stir him.
 Oh, I will make a battle of the Thing,
 Where men vow holy peace, to magnify him.
 Is it not rare to sit and wait o' nights,
 Knowing that murderousness may even now
 Be coming down outside like second darkness
 Because my man is greater?

STEINVOR (*shuddering*)

Is it not rare.

HALLGERD

That blow upon the face
 So long ago is best not spoken of.
 I drove a thrall to steal and burn at Otkell's
 Who would not sell to us in famine time
 But denied Gunnar as if he were suppliant:

Then at our feast when men rode from the Thing
 I spread the stolen food and Gunnar knew.
 He smote me upon the face — indeed he smote me.
 Oh, Gunnar smote me and had shame of me
 And said he'd not partake with any thief;
 Although I stole to injure his despiser. . . .
 But if he had abandoned me as well
 'T is I who should have been unmated now;
 For many men would soon have judged me thief
 And shut me from this land until I died —
 And then I should have lost him. Yet he smote me —

ASTRID

He kept you his — yea, and maybe saved you
 From a debasement that could madden or kill,
 For women thieves ere now have felt a knife
 Severing ear or nose. And yet the feud
 You sowed with Otkell's house shall murder Gunnar.
 Otkell was slain. then Gunnar's enviers,
 Who could not crush him under his own horse
 At the big horse-fight, stirred up Otkell's son
 To avenge his father, for should he be slain
 Two in one stock would prove old Njal's foretelling,
 And Gunnar's place be emptied either way
 For those high helpless men who cannot fill it.
 O mistress, you have hurt us all in this:
 You have cut off your strength, you have maimed your-
 self,
 You are losing power and worship and men's trust.
 When Gunnar dies no other man dare take you.

HALLGERD

You gather poison in your mouth for me.
 A high-born woman may handle what she fancies
 Without being ear-pruned like a pilfering beggar.

Look to your ears if you touch ought of mine:
 Ay, you shall join the mumping sisterhood
 And tramp and learn your difference from me.

(*She turns from ASTRID.*)

Steinvor, I have remembered the great veil,
 The woven cloud, the tissue of gold and garlands,
 That Gunnar took from some outlandish ship
 And thinks was made in Greekland or in Hind:
 Fetch it from the ambry in the bower.

(*STEINVOR goes out by the dais door.*)

ASTRID

Mistress, indeed you are a cherished woman.
 That veil is worth a lifetime's weight of coifs:
 I have heard a queen offered her daughter for it,
 But Gunnar said it should come home and wait —
 And then gave it to you. The half of Iceland
 Tells fabulous legends of a fabulous thing,
 Yet never saw it: I know they never saw it,
 For ere it reached the ambry I came on it
 Tumbled in the loft with ragged kirtles.

HALLGERD

What, are you there again? Let Gunnar alone.

(*STEINVOR enters with the veil folded. HALLGERD takes it with one hand and shakes it into a heap.*)

This is the cloth. He brought it out at night,
 In the first hour that we were left together,
 And begged of me to wear it at high feasts
 And more outshine all women of my time:
 He shaped it to my head with my gold circlet,
 Saying my hair smouldered like Rhine-fire through,
 He let it fall about my neck, and fall

About my shoulders, mingle with my skirts,
And billow in the draught along the floor.

(She rises and holds the veil behind her head.)

I know I dazzled as if I entered in
And walked upon a windy sunset and drank it,
Yet must I stammer with such strange uncouthness
And tear it from me, tangling my arms in it.
Why should I so befool myself and seem
A laughable bundle in each woman's eyes,
Wearing such things as no one ever wore,
Useless . . . no head-cloth . . . too unlike my fellows.
Yet he turns miser for a tiny coif.
It would cut into many golden coifs
And dim some women in their Irish clouts —
But no; I'll shape and stitch it into shifts,
Smirch it like linen, patch it with rags, to watch
His silent anger when he sees my answer.
Give me thy shears, girl Oddny.

ODDNY

You'll not part it?

HALLGERD

I'll shorten it.

ODDNY

I have no shears with me

HALLGERD

No matter; I can start it with my teeth
And tear it down the folds. So. So. So. So.
Here's a fine shift for summer and another.
I'll find my shears and chop out waists and neck-holes.
Ay, Gunnar, Gunnar!

(She throws the tissue on the ground, and goes out by the dais door.)

ODDNY (*lifting one of the pieces*)

O me! A wonder has vanished.

STEINVOR

What is a wonder less? She has done finely,
Setting her worth above dead marvels and shows.

(*The deep menacing baying of the hound is heard near at hand. A woman's cry follows it.*)

They come, they come! Let us flee by the bower!

(*Starting up, she stumbles in the tissue and sinks upon it. The others rise.*)

You are leaving me — will you not wait for me —
Take, take me with you.

(*Mingled cries of women are heard.*)

GUNNAR (*outside*)

Samm, it is well: be still.

Women, be quiet; loose me; get from my feet,
Or I will have the hound to wipe me clear.

STEINVOR (*recovering herself*)

Women are sent to spy.

(*The sound of a door being opened is heard. GUNNAR enters from the left, followed by three beggar-women, BIARTEY, JOFRID, and GUDFINN. They hobble and limp, and are swathed in shapeless, nameless rags which trail about their feet; BIARTEY's left sleeve is torn completely away, leaving her arm bare and mud-smeared; the others' skirts are torn, and JOFRID's gown at the neck; GUDFINN wears a felt hood buttoned under her chin; the others' faces are almost hid in falling tangles of grey hair. Their faces are shriveled and weather-beaten, and BIARTEY's mouth is distorted by two front teeth that project like tusks.*)

GUNNAR

Get in to the light.

Yea, has he mouthed ye? . . . What men send ye here?
 Who are ye? Whence come ye? What do ye seek?
 I think no mother ever suckled you:
 You must have dragged your roots up in waste places
 One foot at once, or heaved a shoulder up —

BIARTEY (*interrupting him*)

Out of the bosoms of cairns and standing stones.
 I am Biartey: she is Jofrid · she is Gudfinn ·
 We are lone women known to no man now.
 We are not sent: we come.

GUNNAR

Well, you come.

You appear by night, rising under my eyes
 Like marshy breath or shadows on the wall;
 Yet the hound scented you like any evil
 That feels upon the night for a way out.
 And do you, then, indeed wend alone?
 Came you from the West or the sky-covering North,
 Yet saw no thin steel moving in the dark?

BIARTEY

Not West, not North: we slept upon the East,
 Arising in the East where no men dwell.
 We have abided in the mountain places,
 Chanted our woes among the black rocks crouching.

(GUDFINN joins her in a sing-song utterance.)
 From the East, from the East we drove and the wind
 waved us,
 Over the heaths, over the barren ashes.
 We are old, our eyes are old, and the light hurts us,
 We have skins on our eyes that part alone to the star-light.

We stumble about the night, the rocks tremble
 Beneath our trembling feet; black sky thickens,
 Breaks into clots, and lets the moon upon us.

(*JOFRID joins her voice to the voices of the other two.*)

Far from the men who fear us, men who stone us,
 Hiding, hiding, flying whene'er they slumber,
 High on the crags we pause, over the moon-gulfs;
 Black clouds fall and leave us up in the moon-depths
 Where wind flaps our hair and cloaks like fin-webs,
 Ay, and our sleeves that toss with our arms and the cadence
 Of quavering crying among the threatening echoes.
 Then we spread our cloaks and leap down the rock-stairs,
 Sweeping the heaths with our skirts, greying the dew-
 bloom,

Until we feel a pool on the wide dew stretches
 Stilled by the moon or ruffling like breast-feathers,
 And, with grey sleeves cheating the sleepy herons,
 Squat among them, pillow us there and sleep.
 But in the harder wastes we stand upright,
 Like splintered rain-worn boulders set to the wind
 In old confederacy, and rest and sleep.

(*HALLGERD's women are huddled together and clasping each other.*)

ODDNY

What can these women be who sleep like horses,
 Standing up in the darkness? What will they do?

GUNNAR

Ye wail like ravens and have no human thoughts.
 What do ye seek? What will ye here with us?

BIARTEY (as all three cower suddenly)

Succour upon this terrible journeying.
 We have a message for a man in the West,
 Sent by an old man sitting in the East.

We are spent, our feet are moving wounds, our bodies
 Dream of themselves and seem to trail behind us
 Because we went unfed down in the mountains.
 Feed us and shelter us beneath your roof,
 And put us over the Markfleet, over the channels.
 We are weak old women: we are beseeching you.

GUNNAR

You may bide here this night, but on the morrow
 You shall go over, for tramping shameless women
 Carry too many tales from stead to stead —
 And sometimes heavier gear than breath and lies.
 These women will tell the mistress all I grant you;
 Get to the fire until she shall return.

BIARTEY

Thou art a merciful man and we shall thank thee.

(GUNNAR goes out again to the left. The old women approach the young ones gradually.)

Little ones, do not doubt us. Could we hurt you?
 Because we are ugly must we be bewitched?

STEINVOR

Nay, but bewitch us.

BIARTEY

Not in a litten house:
 Not ere the hour when night turns on itself
 And shakes the silence: not while ye wake together.
 Sweet voice, tell us, was that verily Gunnar?

STEINVOR

Arrh — do not touch me, unclean flyer-by-night:
 Have ye birds' feet to match such bat-webbed fingers?

BIARTEY

I am only a cowed curst woman who walks with death;
I will crouch here. Tell us, was it Gunnar?

ODDNY

Yea, Gunnar surely. Is he not big enough
To fit the songs about him?

BIARTEY

He is a man.

Why will his manhood urge him to be dead?
We walk about the whole old land at night,
We enter many dales and many halls:
And everywhere is talk of Gunnar's greatness,
His slayings and his fate outside the law
The last ship has not gone why will he tarry?

ODDNY

He chose a ship, but men who rode with him
Say that his horse threw him upon the shore,
His face toward the Lithe and his own fields;
As he arose he trembled at what he gazed on
(Although those men saw nothing pass or meet them)
And said . . . What said he, girls?

ASTRID

“Fair is the Lithe:

I never thought it was so far, so fair.
Its corn is white, its meadows green after mowing.
I will ride home again and never leave it.”

ODDNY

‘T is an unlikely tale: he never said it.
No one could mind such things in such an hour.

Plainly he saw his fetch come down the sands,
And knew he need not seek another country
And take that with him to walk upon the deck
In night and storm.

GUDFINN

He, he, he! No man speaks thus.

JOFRID

No man, no man: he must be doomed somewhere.

BIARTEY

Doomed and fey, my sisters. . . . We are too old,
Yet I'd not marvel if we outlasted him.
Sisters, that is a fair fierce girl who spins. . . .
My fair fierce girl, you could fight — but can you ride?
Would you not shout to be riding in a storm?
Ah—h, girls learnt riding well when I was a girl,
And foam rides on the breakers as I was taught. . . .
My fair fierce girl, tell me your noble name.

ODDNY

My name is Oddny.

BIARTEY

Oddny, when you are old
Would you not be proud to be no man's purse-string,
But wild and wandering and friends with the earth?
Wander with us and learn to be old yet living.
We'd win fine food with you to beg for us.

STEINVOR

Despised, cast out, unclean, and loose men's night-bird.

ODDNY

When I am old I shall be some man's friend,
And hold him when the darkness comes. . . .

BIARTEY

And mumble by the fire and blink. . . .
 Good Oddny, let me spin for you awhile,
 That Gunnar's house may profit by his guesting:
 Come, trust me with your distaff. . . .

ODDNY

Are there spells
 Wrought on a distaff?

STEINVOR

Only by the Norns,
 And they'll not sit with human folk to-night.

ODDNY

Then you may spin all night for what I care;
 But let the yarn run clean from knots and snarls,
 Or I shall have the blame when you are gone.

BIARTEY (*taking the distaff*)

Trust well the aged knowledge of my hands;
 Thin and thin do I spin, and the thread draws finer.

(*She sings as she spins.*)

They go by three,
 And the moon shivers;
 The tired waves flee,
 The hidden rivers
 Also flee

I take three strands;
 There is one for her,
 One for my hands,
 And one to stir
 For another's hands.

I twine them thinner,
The dead wool doubts;
The outer is inner,
The core slips out

(*HALLGERD reenters by the dais door, holding a pair of shears.*)

HALLGERD

What are these women, Oddny? Who let them in?

BIARTEY (*who spins through all that follows*)

Lady, the man of fame who is your man
Gave us his peace to-night, and that of his house.
We are blown beggars tramping about the land,
Denied a home for our evil and vagrant hearts;
We sought this shelter when the first dew soaked us,
And should have perished by the giant hound
But Gunnar fought it with his eyes and saved us.
That is a strange hound, with a man's mind in it.

HALLGERD (*seating herself in the high-seat*)

It is an Irish hound, from that strange soil
Where men by day walk with unearthly eyes
And cross the veils of the air, and are not men
But fierce abstractions eating their own hearts
Impatiently and seeing too much to be joyful.
If Gunnar welcomed ye, ye may remain.

BIARTEY

She is a fair free lady, is she not?
But that was to be looked for in a high one
Who counts among her fathers the bright Sigurd,
The bane of Fafnir the Worm, the end of the god-kings;

Among her mothers Brynhild, the lass of Odin,
 The maddener of swords, the night-clouds' rider.
 She has kept sweet that father's lore of bird-speech,
 She wears that mother's power to cheat a god.
 Sisters, she does well to be proud

JOFRID and GUDFINN

Ay, well.

HALLGERD (*shaping the tissue with her shears*)

I need no witch to tell I am of rare seed,
 Nor measure my pride nor praise it. Do I not know?
 Old women, ye are welcomed: sit with us,
 And while we stitch tell us what gossip runs —
 But if strife might be warmed by spreading it.

BIARTEY

Lady, we are hungered; we were lost
 All night among the mountains of the East,
 Clouds of the cliffs come down my eyes again.
 I pray you let some thrall bring us to food.

HALLGERD

Ye get nought here. The supper is long over;
 The women shall not let ye know the food-house,
 Or ye'll be thieving in the night. Ye are idle,
 Ye suck a man's house bare and seek another.
 'T is bed-time; get to sleep — that stills much hunger.

BIARTEY

Now it is easy to be seeing what spoils you.
 You were not grasping or ought but over warm
 When Sigmund, Gunnar's kinsman, guested here.
 You followed him, you were too kind with him,

You lavished Gunnar's treasure and gear on him
To draw him on, and did not call that thieving.
Ay, Sigmund took your feuds on him and died
As Gunnar shall. Men have much harm by you.

HALLGERD

Now have I gashed the golden cloth awry:
'T is ended — a ruin of clouts — the worth of the gift —
Bridal dish-clouts — nay, a bundle of flame
I'll burn it to a breath of its old queen's ashes:
Fire, O fire, drink up.

*(She throws the shreds of the veil on the glowing embers:
they waft to ashes with a brief high flare. She goes to
JOFRID.)*

There's one of you

That holds her head in a bird's sideways fashion:
I know that reach o' the chin — What's under thy hair? —
(She fixes JOFRID with her knee, and lifts her hair.)
Pfui, 't is not hair, but sopped and rotting moss —
A thief, a thief indeed. — And twice a thief.
She has no ears. Keep thy hooked fingers still
While thou art here, for if I miss a mouthful
Thou shalt miss all thy nose. Get up, get up,
I'll lodge ye with the mares.

JOFRID (*starting up*)

Three men, three men,
Three men have wived you, and for all you gave them
Paid with three blows upon a cheek once kissed —
To every man a blow — and the last blow
All the land knows was won by thieving food. . . .
Yea, Gunnar is ended by the theft and the thief.
Is it not told that when you first grew tall,

A false rare girl, Hrut your own kinsman said,
 "I know not whence thief's eyes entered our blood."
 You have more ears, yet are you not my sister?
 Our evil vagrant heart is deeper in you.

HALLGERD (*snatching the distaff from BIARTEY*)

Out and be gone, be gone. Lie with the mountains,
 Smother among the thunder; stale dew mould you.
 Outstrip the hound, or he shall so embrace you. . . .

BIARTEY

Now is all done . . . all done . . . and all your deed.
 She broke the thread, and it shall not join again.
 Spindle, spindle, the coiling weft shall dwindle;
 Leap on the fire and burn, for all is done.

(*She casts the spindle upon the fire, and stretches her hands toward it.*)

HALLGERD (*attacking them with the distaff*)

Into the night. . . . Dissolve. . . .

BIARTEY (*as the three rush toward the door*)

Sisters, away:

Leave the woman to her smouldering beauty,
 Leave the fire that's kinder than the woman,
 Leave the roof-tree ere it falls. It falls.

(*GUDFINN joins her. Each time HALLGERD flags they turn as they chant, and point at her.*)

We shall cry no more in the high rock-places,
 We are gone from the night, the winds and the clouds are
 empty:
 Soon the man in the West shall receive our message.

(*JOFRID's voice joins the other voices.*)

Men reject us, yet their house is unstable.
 The slayers' hands are warm — the sound of their riding
 Reached us down the ages, ever approaching.

HALLGERD (*at the same time, her voice high over theirs*)
 Pack, ye rag-heaps — or I'll unravel you.

THE THREE (*continuously*)

House that spurns us, woe shall come upon you:
 Death shall hollow you. Now we curse the woman —
 May all the woes smite her till she can feel them.
 Shall we not roost in her bower yet? Woe! Woe!

(*The distaff breaks, and HALLGERD drives them out with her hands. Their voices continue for a moment outside, dying away.*)

Call to the owl-friends. . . . Woe! Woe! Woe!

ASTRID

Whence came these mounds of dread to haunt the night?
 It doubles this disquiet to have them near us.

ODDNY

They must be witches — and it was my distaff —
 Will fire eat through me. . . .

STEINVOR

Or the Norns themselves.

HALLGERD

Or bad old women used to govern by fear.
 To bed, to bed — we are all up too late.

STEINVOR (*as she turns with ASTRID and ODDNY to the dais*)
 If beds are made for sleep we might sit long.

(*They go out by the dais door.*)

GUNNAR (*as he enters hastily from the left*)

Where are those women? There's some secret in them:
I have heard such others crying down to them.

HALLGERD

They turned foul-mouthed, they beckoned evil toward us—
I drove them forth a breath ago.

GUNNAR

Forth? Whence?

HALLGERD

By the great door: they cried about the night.

(RANNVEIG follows GUNNAR *in.*)

GUNNAR

Nay, but I entered there and passed them not.
Mother, where are the women?

RANNVEIG

I saw none come.

GUNNAR

They have not come, they have gone.

RANNVEIG

I crossed the yard,
Hearing a noise, but a big bird dropped past,
Beating my eyes; and then the yard was clear.

(*The deep baying of the hound is heard again.*)

GUNNAR

They must be spies: yonder is news of them.

The wise hound knew them, and knew them again.

(*The baying is succeeded by one wild howl.*)

Nay, nay!

Men treat thee sorely, Samm my fosterling:
 Even by death thou warnest — but it is meant
 That our two deaths will not be far apart.

RANNVEIG

Think you that men are yonder?

GUNNAR

Men are yonder.

RANNVEIG

My son, my son, get on the rattling war-woof,
 The old grey shift of Odin, the hide of steel.
 Handle the snake with edges, the fang of the rings.

GUNNAR (*going to the weapons by the high-seat*)

There are not enough moments to get under
 That heavy fleece: an iron hat must serve.

HALLGERD

O brave! O brave! — he'll dare them with no shield.

GUNNAR (*lifting down the great bill*)

Let me but reach this haft, I shall get hold
 Of steel enough to fence me all about.

(*He shakes the bill above his head: a deep resonant humming follows.*

The dais door is thrown open, and ODDNY, ASTRID, and STEINVOR stream through in their night-clothes.)

STEINVOR

The bill!

ODDNY

The bill is singing!

ASTRID

The bill sings!

GUNNAR (*shaking the bill again*)

Ay, brain-biter, waken. . . . Awake and whisper
 Out of the throat of dread thy one brief burden.
 Blind art thou, and thy kiss will do no choosing:
 Worn art thou to a hair's grey edge, a nothing
 That slips through all it finds, seeking more nothing.
 There is a time, brain-biter, a time that comes
 When there shall be much quietness for thee:
 Men will be still about thee. I shall know.
 It is not yet: the wind shall hiss at thee first.
 Ahui! Leap up, brain-biter; sing again.
 Sing! Sing thy verse of anger and feel my hands.

RANNVEIG

Stand thou, my Gunnar, in the porch to meet them,
 And the great door shall keep thy back for thee.

GUNNAR

I had a brother there. Brother, where are you. . . .

HALLGERD

Nay, nay. Get thou, my Gunnar, to the loft,
 Stand at the casement, watch them how they come.
 Arrows maybe could drop on them from there.

RANNVEIG

'T is good: the woman's cunning for once is faithful.

GUNNAR (*turning again to the weapons*)

'T is good, for now I hear a foot that stumbles
 Along the stable-roof against the hall.
 My bow — where is my bow? Here with its arrows. . . .
 Go in again, you women on the dais,
 And listen at the casement of the bower
 For men who cross the yard, and for their words.

ASTRID

O Gunnar, we shall serve you.

(ASTRID, ODDNY, and STEINVOR go out by the dais door.)

RANNVEIG

Hallgerd, come;

We must shut fast the door, bar the great door,
Or they'll be in on us and murder him.

HALLGERD

Not I: I'd rather set the door wide open
And watch my Gunnar kindling at the peril,
Keeping them back — shaming men for ever
Who could not enter at a gaping door.

RANNVEIG

Bar the great door, I say, or I will bar it —
Door of the house you rule. . . . Son, son, command it

GUNNAR (*as he ascends to the loft*)

O spendthrift fire, do you waft up again?
Hallgerd, what riot of ruinous chance will sate you? . . .
Let the door stand, my mother: it is her way.

(*He looks out at the casement.*)

Here's a red kirtle on the lower roof.

(*He thrusts with the bill through the casement.*)

A MAN'S VOICE (*far off*)

Is Gunnar within?

THORGrim THE EASTERLING'S VOICE (*near the casement*)

Find that out for yourselves:

I am only sure his bill is yet within.

(*A noise of falling is heard.*)

GUNNAR

The Easterling from Sandgil might be dying —
He has gone down the roof, yet no feet helped him.

(*A shouting of many men is heard: GUNNAR starts back from the casement as several arrows fly in.*)

Now there are black flies biting before a storm.

I see men gathering beneath the cart-shed:
Gizur the White and Geir the priest are there,
And a lean whispering shape that should be Mord.
I have a sting for some one —

(*He looses an arrow: a distant cry follows.*)

Valgard's voice. . . .

A shaft of theirs is lying on the roof;
I'll send it back, for if it should take root
A hurt from their own spent and worthless weapon
Would put a scorn upon their tale for ever.

(*He leans out for the arrow.*)

RANNVEIG

Do not, my son: rouse them not up again
When they are slackening in their attack.

HALLGERD

Shoot, shoot it out, and I'll come up to mock them.

GUNNAR (*loosing the arrow*)

Hoia! Swerve down upon them, little hawk.

(*A shout follows.*)

Now they run all together round one man:
Now they murmur . . .

A VOICE

Close in, lift bows again:

He has no shafts, for this is one of ours.

(*Arrows fly in at the casement.*)

GUNNAR

Wife, here is something in my arm at last:
The head is twisted — I must cut it clear.

(*STEINVOR throws open the dais door and rushes through with a high shriek.*)

STEINVOR

Woman, let us out — help us out —
The burning comes — they are calling out for fire.

(*She shrieks again. ODDNY and ASTRID, who have come behind her, muffle her head in a kirtle and lift her.*)

ASTRID (*turning as they bear her out*)

Fire suffuses only her cloudy brain:
The flare she walks in is on the other side
Of her shot eyes. We heard a passionate voice,
A shrill unwomanish voice that must be Mord,
With "Let us burn him — burn him house and all."
And then a grave and trembling voice replied,
"Although my life hung on it, it shall not be."
Again the cunning fanatic voice went on
"I say the house must burn above his head."
And the unlifted voice, "Why wilt thou speak
Of what none wishes: it shall never be."

(*ASTRID and ODDNY disappear with STEINVOR.*)

GUNNAR

To fight with honest men is worth much friendship:
I'll strive with them again.

(*He lifts his bow and loosens arrows at intervals while HALLGERD and RANNVEIG speak.*)

HALLGERD (*in an undertone to RANNVEIG, looking out meanwhile to the left*)

Mother, come here —
 Come here and hearken. Is there not a foot,
 A stealthy step, a fumbling on the latch
 Of the great door? They come, they come, old mother:
 Are you not blithe and thirsty, knowing they come
 And cannot be held back? Watch and be secret,
 To feel things pass that cannot be undone.

RANNVEIG

It is the latch. Cry out, cry out for Gunnar,
 And bring him from the loft.

HALLGERD

Oh, never:
 For then they'd swarm upon him from the roof.
 Leave him up there and he can bay both armies,
 While the whole dance goes merrily before us
 And we can warm our hearts at such a flare.

RANNVEIG (*turning both ways, while HALLGERD watches her gleefully*)

Gunnar, my son, my son! What shall I do?
 (ORMILD enters from the left, white and with her hand
 to her side, and walking as one sick.)

HALLGERD

Bah — here's a bleached assault. . . .

RANNVEIG

Oh, lonesome thing,
 To be forgot and left in such a night.
 What is there now — are terrors surging still?

ORMILD

I know not what has gone: when the men came
 I hid in the far cowhouse. I think I swooned. . . .
 And then I followed the shadow. Who is dead?

RANNVEIG

Go to the bower. the women will care for you.

(ORMILD totters up the hall from pillar to pillar.)

ASTRID (*entering by the dais door*)

Now they have found the weather-ropes and lashed them
 Over the carven ends of the beams outside:
 They bear on them, they tighten them with levers,
 And soon they'll tear the high roof off the hall.

GUNNAR

Get back and bolt the women into the bower.

(ASTRID takes ORMILD, who has just reached her, and goes out with her by the dais door, which closes after them.)

Hallgerd, go in: I shall be here thereafter.

HALLGERD

I will not stir. Your mother had best go in.

RANNVEIG

How shall I stir?

VOICES (*outside and gathering volume*)

Ai . . . Ai . . . Reach harder . . . Ai . . .

GUNNAR

Stand clear, stand clear — it moves.

THE VOICES

It moves . . . Ai, ai . . .

(*The whole roof slides down rumblingly, disappearing with a crash behind the wall of the house. All is dark above. Fine snow sifts down now and then to the end of the play.*)

GUNNAR (*handling his bow*)

The wind has changed: 't is coming on to snow.
The harvesters will hurry in to-morrow.

(THORBRAND THORLEIKSSON appears above the wall-top a little past GUNNAR, and, reaching noiselessly with a sword, cuts GUNNAR's bowstring.)

GUNNAR (*dropping the bow and seizing his bill*)

Ay, Thorbrand, is it thou? That's a rare blade,
To shear through hemp and gut. . . . Let your wife have it
For snipping needle-yarn; or try it again.

THORBRAND (*raising his sword*)

I must be getting back ere the snow thickens.
So here's my message to the end — or farther.
Gunnar, this night it is time to start your journey
And get you out of Iceland. . . .

GUNNAR (*thrusting at THORBRAND with the bill*)

I think it is.

So you shall go before me in the dark
Wait for me when you find a quiet shelter.

(THORBRAND sinks backward from the wall and is heard to fall farther. Immediately ASBRAND THORLEIKSSON starts up in his place.)

ASBRAND (*striking repeatedly with a sword*)

Oh, down, down, down!

GUNNAR (*parrying the blows with the bill*)

Ay, Asbrand, thou as well?

Thy brother Thorbrand was up here but now:

He has gone back the other way, maybe —

Be hasty, or you'll not come up with him.

(*He thrusts with the bill: ASBRAND lifts a shield before the blow.*)

Here's the first shield that I have seen to-night.

(*The bill pierces the shield: ASBRAND disappears and is heard to fall. GUNNAR turns from the casement.*)

Hallgerd, my harp that had but one long string,

But one low song, but one brief wingy flight,

Is voiceless, for my bowstring is cut off.

Sever two locks of hair for my sake now,

Spoil those bright coils of power, give me your hair,

And with my mother twist those locks together

Into a bowstring for me. Fierce small head,

Thy stinging tresses shall scourge men forth by me.

HALLGERD

Does ought lie on it?

GUNNAR

Nought but my life lies on it;

For they will never dare to close on me

If I can keep my bow bended and singing.

HALLGERD (*tossing back her hair*)

Then now I call to your mind that bygone blow

You gave my face; and never a whit do I care

If you hold out a long time or a short.

GUNNAR

Every man who has trod a war-ship's deck,

And borne a weapon of pride, has a proud heart

And asks not twice for any little thing.
Hallgerd, I 'll ask no more from you, no more.

RANNVEIG (*tearing off her wimple*)

She will not mar her honour of widowhood.
Oh, widows' manes are priceless. . . . Off, mean wimple —
I am a finished widow, why do you hide me?
Son, son who knew my bosom before hers,
Look down and curse for an unreverend thing
An old bald woman who is no use at last.
These bleachy-threads, these tufts of death's first combing,
And loosening heart-strings twisted up together
Would not make half a bowstring. Son, forgive me. . . .

GUNNAR

A grasping woman's gold upon her head
Is made for hoarding, like all other gold:
A spendthrift woman's gold upon her head
Is made for spending on herself. Let be —
She goes her heart's way, and I go to earth.

(AUNUND's *head rises above the wall near GUNNAR.*)
What, are you there?

AUNUND

Yea, Gunnar, we are here.

GUNNAR (*thrusting with the bill*)

Then bide you there.

(AUNUND's *head sinks*; THORGEIR's *rises in the same place.*)

How many heads have you?

THORGEIR

But half as many as the feet we grow on.

GUNNAR

And I've not yet used up (*thrusting again*) all my hands.

*(As he thrusts another man rises a little farther back,
and leaps past him into the loft. Others follow, and
GUNNAR is soon surrounded by many armed men, so
that only the rising and falling of his bill is seen)*

The threshing-floor is full. . . . Up, up, brain-biter!

We work too late to-night — up, open the husks.

Oh, smite and pulse

On their anvil heads:

The smithy is full,

There are shoes to be made

For the hoofs of the steeds

Of the Valkyr girls. . . .

FIRST MAN

Hack through the shaft. . . .

SECOND MAN

Receive the blade

In the breast of a shield,

And wrench it round. . . .

GUNNAR

For the hoofs of the steeds

Of the Valkyr girls

Who race up the night

To be first at our feast,

First in the play

With immortal spears

In deadly holes. . . .

THIRD MAN

Try at his back. . . .

MANY VOICES (*shouting in confusion*)

Have him down. . . . Heels on the bill . . . Ahui,
ahui . . .

(*The bill does not rise.*)

HROALD (*with the breaking voice of a young man,
high over all*)

Father . . . It is my blow. . . . It is I who kill him.

(*The crowd parts, suddenly silent, showing GUNNAR
fallen. RANNVEIG covers her face with her hands.*)

HALLGERD (*laughing as she leans forward and holds her
breasts in her hands*)

O clear sweet laughter of my heart, flow out!
It is so mighty and beautiful and blithe
To watch a man dying — to hover and watch.

RANNVEIG

Cease: are you not immortal in shame already?

HALLGERD

Heroes, what deeds ye compass, what great deeds —
One man has held ye from an open door:
Heroes, heroes, are ye undefeated?

GIZUR (*an old white-bearded man, to the other riders*)

We have laid low to earth a mighty chief:
We have laboured harder than on greater deeds,
And maybe won remembrance by the deeds
Of Gunnar when no deed of ours should live;
For this defence of his shall outlast kingdoms
And gather him fame till there are no more men.

MORD

Come down and splinter those old birds his gods
 That perch upon the carven high-seat pillars,
 Wreck every place his shadow fell upon,
 Rive out his gear, drive off his forfeit beasts.

SECOND MAN

It shall not be.

MANY MEN

Never.

GIZUR

We'll never do it.

Let no man lift a blade or finger a clout —
 Is not this Gunnar, Gunnar, whom we have slain?
 Home, home, before the dawn shows all our deed.

(The riders go down quickly over the wall-top, and disappear.)

HALLGERD

Now I shall close his nostrils and his eyes,
 And thereby take his blood-feud into my hands.

RANNVEIG

If you do stir I'll choke you with your hair.
 I will not let your murderous mind be near him
 When he no more can choose and does not know.

HALLGERD

His wife I was, and yet he never judged me:
 He did not set your motherhood between us.
 Let me alone — I stand here for my sons.

RANNVEIG

The wolf, the carrion bird, and the fair woman
Hurry upon a corpse, as if they think
That all is left for them the grey gods need not.

(*She twines her hands in HALLGERD's hair and draws her down to the floor.*)

Oh, I will comb your hair with bones and thumbs,
Array these locks in my right widow's way,
And deck you like the bed-mate of the dead.
Lie down upon the earth as Gunnar lies,
Or I can never match him in your looks
And whiten you and make your heart as cold.

HALLGERD

Mother, what will you do? Unloose me now —
Your eyes would not look so at me alone.

RANNVEIG

Be still, my daughter. . . .

HALLGERD

And then?

RANNVEIG

Ah, do not fear —

I see a peril nigh and all its blitheness.
Order your limbs — stretch out your length of beauty,
Let down your hands and close those deepening eyes,
Or you can never stiffen as you should.
A murdered man should have a murdered wife
When all his fate is treasured in her mouth.
This wifely hairpin will be sharp enough.

HALLGERD (*starting up as RANNVEIG half loosens her to take a hairpin from her own head*)

She is mad, mad. . . . Oh, the bower is barred —
Hallgerd, come out, let mountains cover you.

(*She rushes out to the left.*)

RANNVEIG (*following her*)

The night take you indeed. . . .

GIZUR (*as he enters from the left*)

Ay, drive her out;
For no man's house was ever better by her.

RANNVEIG

Is an old woman's life desired as well?

GIZUR

We ask that you will grant us earth hereby
Of Gunnar's earth, for two men dead to-night
To lie beneath a cairn that we shall raise.

RANNVEIG

Only for two? Take it: ask more of me.
I wish the measure were for all of you.

GIZUR

Your words must be forgiven you, old mother,
For none has had a greater loss than yours.
Why would he set himself against us all. . . .

(*He goes out.*)

RANNVEIG

Gunnar, my son, we are alone again

(*She goes up the hall, mounts to the loft, and stoops beside him.*)

Oh, they have hurt you — but that is forgot.
Boy, it is bedtime; though I am too changed,
And cannot lift you up and lay you in,
You shall go warm to bed — I'll put you there.
There is no comfort in my breast to-night,
But close your eyes beneath my fingers' touch,
Slip your feet down, and let me smooth your hands:
Then sleep and sleep. Ay, all the world's asleep.

(*She rises.*)

You had a rare toy when you were awake —
I'll wipe it with my hair. . . . Nay, keep it so,
The colour on it now has gladdened you.
It shall lie near you.

(*She raises the bill: the deep hum follows.*)

No; it remembers him,
And other men shall fall by it through Gunnar:
The bill, the bill is singing. . . . The bill sings!

(*She kisses the weapon, then shakes it on high.*)

[CURTAIN]

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION IN READING THE PLAYS

1. *The Forces in the Play.*

What is the "passion" — that is, what exactly do these people desire who "want their ain way"? What forces favor these desires, and what oppose them — for instance, David Pirnie's determination to tell wee Alexander a bit story, in *The Philosopher of Butterbiggins*? Can you always put any one character altogether on one side? Or does his own weakness or carelessness or stupidity, for example, sometimes work against his getting what he wants, so that he is, in part, *not* on his own side, but against it, as Brutus is in *Julius Cæsar*? Are there other forces in the play besides the people — storm or accident or fate? With what side or what character are you in sympathy? Is this constant throughout the play, or do you feel a change at some point in it? Does the author sympathize with any special character? Does he have a prejudice against any one of them? For example, in *Campbell of Kilmhor*, where is your sympathy? Where is the author's, apparently?

2. *The Beginning and the End.*

What events important to this play occurred before the curtain rises? Why does the author begin just here, and not earlier or later? How does he contrive to let you know these important things without coming before the curtain to announce them himself, or having two servants dusting the furniture and telling them to each other?

What happens *after* the curtain falls? Can you go on picturing these events? Are any of them important to the story — for instance, in *The Beggar and the King*? Why did the author stop before telling us these things?

Does the ending satisfy you? Even if you do not find it happy and enjoyable, does it seem the natural and perhaps the inevitable result of the forces at work — in *Riders to the Sea* and *Campbell of Kilmhor*, for instance? Or has the author interfered to make characters do what they would not naturally do, or used chance and coincidence, like the accidentally discovered will or the long-lost relative in melodramas, to bring about a result he prefers — a “happy ending,” or a clap-trap surprise, or a supposed proof of some theory about politics or morals?

Does the interest mount steadily from beginning to end, or does it droop and fail somewhere? You may find it interesting to try drawing the diagram of interest for a play, as suggested in chapter x of Dr. Brander Matthews's *Study of the Drama*, and accounting for the drop in interest, if you find any.

3. *The Playwright's Purpose.*

What was the author trying to do in writing the play?
It may have been: —

Merely to tell a good story

To paint a picture of life in the Arran Islands or in old France or in a modern industrial town

To show us character and its development, as in novels like Thackeray's and Eliot's (Of course, brief plays like these cannot show development of character, but only critical points in such development — the result of forces perhaps long at work, or the awakening of new ideas and other determinants of character.)

To portray a social situation, such as the relation between workmen and employers, or between men and women

To show the inevitable effects of action and motive, as of the determined loyalty of Dugald Stewart and his mother, or the battle of fisher-folk or weavers with grinding poverty

Of course, no play will probably do any one of these things exclusively, but usually each is concerned most with some one purpose

What effect has the play on you? Even if its tragedy is painful or its account of human character makes you uncomfortable, is it good for you to realize these things, or merely uselessly unpleasant? Is the play stupidly and falsely cheering because it presents untrue "happy endings" or other distortions of things as they are? Do you think the play has merely temporary, or genuine and permanent, appeal?

NOTES ON THE DRAMAS AND THE DRAMATISTS

	PAGE
<i>Harold Chapin: The Philosopher of Butterbiggins</i>	1

Harold Chapin, as we learn from *Soldier and Dramatist* (Lane, 1917), was an American both by ancestry and nativity. But he lived the greater part of his life in England, and died for England at Loos in April, 1915. His activity was always associated with the stage. When he was but seven years old he played the little Marcus to his mother's Volumnia at the Shakespeare Festival, at Stratford-on-Avon in 1893. In 1911 he produced Mr. Harold Brighouse's *Lonesome-Like* and several of his own short plays at the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. For several years before the war he was Mr. Granville Barker's stage manager, and helped him to produce the beautiful Shakespearean plays at the Savoy Theatre in London.

Of Chapin's own dramas, *The New Morality* and *Art and Opportunity* have been given recently in New York and in London, and several of the one-act plays at a memorial performance in London in 1916, in matinée at the Punch and Judy Theatre, and before the Drama League in New York in March and April, 1921. Of the shorter plays, mentioned in the bibliographies following these notes, *It's the Poor that 'elps the Poor*, *The Dumb and the Blind*, and *The Philosopher of Butterbiggins* have been given the highest praise by such critics as Mr. William Archer, who wrote, "No English-speaking man of more unquestionable genius has been lost to the world in this world-frenzy." These true and honest dramas represent the English Repertory theatres at their best in this brief form, and give promise of the great and permanently interesting "human comedy" which Chapin might have completed had his life not been sacrificed. In spite of the simplicity and lightness of the little play here given, there is more shrewd philosophy in old David Pirnie, and more real humanity in his family, than is to be found portrayed in many pre-

tentious social dramas and difficult psychological novels. It is admirable on the stage, as was shown by the Provincetown Players last winter. In the memorial performance for Harold Chapin in London, the author's little son appeared in the part of wee Alexander.

"Butterbiggens," Mrs. Alice Chapin, the dramatist's mother, replied to an inquiry as to "what Butterbiggens is or are," "is, are, and always will be a suburb of Glasgow."

There is little difficulty with the modified Scots dialect in this play if one remembers that *ae* generally takes the place of such sounds as *e* in *tea*, *o* in *so*, *a* in *have*, and so on, and that *a'* means *all*. A *wean* is a small *bairn*, *yinst* is *once*, *ava* is *at all*, and *thrang* is "thick" or intimate.

Distempered means calcined, or painted in water-dissolved color on the plaster.

Lady Gregory: SPREADING THE NEWS

14

In her notes on the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, which she was most influential in building up, Lady Augusta Gregory says that it was the desire of the players and writers who worked there to establish an Irish drama which should have a "firm base in reality and an apex of beauty." This phrase, which admirably expresses the best in the play-making going on to-day, finds most adequate illustration in the work of Synge, of Yeats, and of Lady Gregory herself. The basis in reality of such jolly and robust comedies as her *Seven Irish Plays* and *New Irish Comedies* is clearly discernible. They are in the tradition of the best early English comedy, from the miracle plays onward; of Hans Sach's *Shrovetide Plays*, and of Molière's dramatizations of mediæval *fabliaux*, as in *The Physician in Spite of Himself*. Lady Gregory describes in her notes on *Spreading the News* how the play grew out of an idea of picturing tragic consequences from idle rumor and defamation of character. It is certainly not to be regretted that she allowed "laughter to have its way with the little play," and gave Bartley Fallon a share of glory from the woeful day to illuminate dull, older years.

The inhabitants of this same village of Cloon appear as old friends in other of Lady Gregory's plays, with, as usual, nothing to do but mind one another's business. In *The Jackdaw* another absurd rumor is fanned into full blaze by greed, upon *Hyacinth Halvey* works the potent and embarrassing influence of too good a reputation. Still other plays attain a notable height of beauty

— notably *The Rising of the Moon* and *The Traveling Man*. *The Gaol Gate* tells a story similar to that of *Campbell of Kilmhor*, with genuinely tragic effect. She has written, besides, two volumes of Irish folk-history, *Gods and Fighting Men* and *Cuchulain of Muirthemne*, which Mr Yeats calls masterpieces of prose which one “can weigh with Malory and feel no discontent at the tally.”¹ A writer who has produced such range and beauty of works, from very human, characteristic comedy and farce to fine, poignant tragedy, besides writing excellent stories and contributing largely to an important experimental theatre, is secure of her share of fame.

The “Removable Magistrate” is apparently one appointed by British officialdom, this one, having just come from the Bay of Bengal, is going to fit upon the natives of Cloon methods which may have worked in a rather different district.

The song “with a skin on it,” which Bartley sings, is given in Lady Gregory’s *Seven Short Plays* (Putnam, 1909).

Winthrop Parkhurst: THE BEGGAR AND THE KING

34

The Beggar and the King looks at first like a pleasant absurdity; it is in reality valuable as a short history of the ostrich method of dealing with realities. The beggar, of course, continues to cry aloud after his tongue, and even his head, have been removed, because there are so many millions of him. Again and again, in the course of history, he has gathered desperate courage to defy authority that is blind and evil. Always at last, as in the French and the Russian revolutions and in the more recent European revolts, he succeeds in wresting the power from those in autocratic authority. And yet, just as of old, not only kings, but all others who attempt dictatorship and the playing of providence, try the simple tactics of the ostrich, they close the window, or their eyes and ears, as a sufficient answer to rebellion. Appreciating the futility of these methods, we have no difficulty in continuing the drama ourselves beyond the fall of the curtain.

Mr Winthrop Parkhurst, by birth a New Yorker, according to a family tradition is a descendant on his mother’s side of John Huss, the Bohemian reformer and martyr, and on his father’s of the executioner of Charles I of England. His writings include *Maracca*, a Biblical one-act play, and several short satirical sketches.

¹ Appendix to *The Poetical Works of William B. Yeats*, volume II. (Macmillan, 1912).

George Middleton: TIDES 45

Mr. George Middleton generally pictures in his dramas problems which are not easy to solve. And he does not try to give ready-made solutions. He merely shows us how various people have tried to work these problems, and his dramas are like real life because the attempts at solutions fail as often as they succeed. Certain of the problems Mr. Middleton presents are such as high-school students meet and can well consider; several of these plays appear in the lists following. *Tides* is about a man who has supported an unpopular theory. Nothing is said about whether his ideal is right or wrong, but it is clear that he has held to it in perfect sincerity of belief and has been quite unmoved by the bitterest persecution. But when he is offered honor and flattering respect, though he does not really change his belief and adherence, he compromises and partially surrenders his ideal. The fable is similar to that of Ibsen's *The League of Youth*, but the telling here is straighter and clearer. William White's self-deception is made evident to him and to us by his honest and courageous wife, who tells him frankly of it. "Have n't you sometimes noticed that is what bitterness to another means: a failure within oneself?" she comments wisely. An effective contrast is furnished by the son, who has altogether and honestly abandoned his father's theories in the face of new realities as he sees them.

Eugene O'Neill: ILE 64

Eugene O'Neill, American seaman, laborer, newspaperman, and dramatist, has been associated for several years with the Provincetown Players. This group, including Mrs. Glaspell and other playwrights of importance, gather in Provincetown, on Cape Cod, during the summer, and in winter present significant foreign and native plays in a converted stable on Macdougall Street in New York, where may be seen the ring to which Pegasus was once tethered! In 1919 Mr. O'Neill received the Pulitzer Prize for the most important American play of the year.

Mr. O'Neill has had experience of the sea, like the great Englishmen, Mr. Masefield and Mr. Joseph Conrad. He knows the interminable whaling voyages, as described in Melville's *Moby Dick* and the first chapter of *Typee* — best of all in Bullen's *Cruise of the Cachalot*. Out of this experience of hard life and harder men

he has written many poignant and terrible dramas — perhaps the greatest this story of the skipper's wife who insisted on making the voyage with her husband and is worn to the edge of insanity by months of ice-bound solitude. The motive of Captain Keeney is like that which caused Skipper Ireson to leave his fellow townsmen to sink in Chaleur Bay. Against his iron determination his wife's piteous pleading and evident suffering are more potent than the mutinying hands, whether she can avail to turn him home "with a measly four hundred barrel of ile" is the problem of the play.

J. A. Ferguson: CAMPBELL OF KILMHOR

84

This tragic story of the war and hatred in Scotland belongs in the series of attempts made by Charles Edward Stuart and his father to regain the throne lost by James II in 1688 "The Young Pretender's" vigorous campaign in 1745, carried far into England, might easily have succeeded but for the quarrels and disaffection of the Highland chiefs who supported him. His failure was completed at the bloody battle of Culloden, or Drumossie Moor, in 1746, celebrated in Scottish story and song of lamentation. Scott's hero Waverley went into the highland country shortly after these uprisings, and David Balfour, in *Kidnapped*, had numerous adventures in crossing it with Allan Breck Stewart, who was in the service of his kinsmen, the exiled Stuarts. The hatred of Campbells and Stuarts, of Lowlander and Highlander, Loyalist and Jacobite, is intense throughout the record of those days.

The young Scot and his stanch and proudly tearless mother are, of course, the heroic characters in the play. We have a hint that Charles Edward Stuart himself is with the band whom the young man protects so loyally. It may seem strange that the drama is named, not for him, but for the crafty and pitiless executioner of the king's justice. But he is after all the most interesting character in the piece, with his Biblical references in broad Lowland Scots (we may suppose that the Stewarts speak Gaelic among themselves), his superstition, his remorseless cruelty. We should like to see how he takes the discovery that, perhaps for the first time, he has been baffled in his career of unscrupulous and bloody deeds!

This play represents the most successful work of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre in 1914. The author has written no others

which have been published, though he is credited with a good story or two. It may be hoped that he will write other dramas as excellent as this one. He has put into very brief and effective form here the spirit and idea of a most intense period of merciless conflict.

A *kebbuck* is a cheese, *keek* means peek, *toom*, empty; a *besom*, a broom, and *soop*, sweep

John Galsworthy: THE SUN 100

According to Professor Lewisohn and other critics Mr. Galsworthy is without question the foremost English dramatist to-day. Without arguing or attempting to offer solutions, he gives the most searching presentation of problems which we have to face and somehow settle. In *Strife*, after a furious contest and bitter hardships, the strike is settled by a compromise which the leaders of both sides count as failure. Things are much as they were at the start; the difficulty is no nearer solution. In *Justice*, "society stamps out a human life not without its fair possibilities — for eighty-one pounds," because obviously clear and guilty infraction of law cannot go unavenged. Justice is not condemned by the facts shown in this play, nor is its working extolled. In *The Mob*, the patrioteering clement destroys a man who proclaims the injustice of a small and greedy war of conquest. In *The Pigeon*, brilliant debate is held, but no conclusion reached, as to what we should do with derelict and wasted lives, with men who do not fit into the scheme of success and society.

In his sketches and stories Mr. Galsworthy presents these same problems, and again without attempted conclusions. *The Free-lands* particularly is a most dramatic novel of conditions and results similar to those in some of the dramas mentioned above. Many of his sketches and essays also — for example, "My Distant Relative" in *The Inn of Tranquillity* and "Comfort" in *A Commentary* — are of biting and almost cynical irony in viewing proposed and present solutions of problems; but none suggest panaceas. They merely make us think soberly of the size of our problems and their immense complexity, move us to go out to look for more information and to examine carefully our most solid institutions as well as suggested alterations in them.

A large part of Mr. Galsworthy's time and thought, both during the war and since, has been given to the problem of some measure

of justice to soldiers, and particularly to wounded and broken soldiers. In *A Sheaf* and *Another Sheaf* appear various papers presenting sharply the conditions of suffering and neglect that actually exist. *The Sun* is a brief sketch of after-war days,—this time of a wounded man who has gained an advantage over one who escaped injury,—and of joy in deliverance from the hell of war—a joy so profound and luminous that the released soldier cannot let a sharp mischance and disappointment mar his happiness. The whole piece is in the key of Captain Sassoon's verses after the Armistice.—

“Every one suddenly burst out singing”

The other two think the happy soldier mad. We are left wondering what the reaction will be from this height of joyful release to the harsh and sombre conditions of workingmen's life after the peace.

The *silver badge* represents a discharge for wounds. *Crumps* are, of course, shells

Louise Saunders: THE KNAVE OF HEARTS 107

The Knave of Hearts is one of the happy tradition of puppet-plays, which come down in unbroken line from the most ancient history, through the illustrious Dr. Faustus and Mr. Punch, to new and even greater favor and fame to-day. For just as the ancient puppet-shows of Italy and England seemed to be losing ground before the moving-picture invasion, they have been heroically rescued by Mr. Tony Sarg,—whose performance of Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* is perfectly absurd and captivating,—and by other excellent artists.

Puppet-shows are delightful because they are easily made and quite convincing. Very good ones have been improvised even by tiny children, with a pasteboard suit-box opening to the front, a slit at the top to let down paper-doll actors on a thread, a bit of scenery, outdoors or in, drawn as background, and a showman to talk for all the characters. Still better puppets are doll heads and arms of various sorts, dressed in flowing robes and provided with holes for two fingers and a thumb of the operator, who moves them from below. They can be made to dance and antic as you like on a stage above the showman's head, as Punch and Judy have always done. The more elaborate marionettes are worked

with strings from above, so that they can open and close their mouths and otherwise act most realistically; these are, of course, more difficult, but quite possible to make. In such simple theatres, Goethe and Robert Louis Stevenson and many other famous people played themselves endless stories. If you want to pursue this idea further, a list of references below (p. 323) gives you opportunity for all the information you like about marionettes and puppets.

The Knave of Hearts is charming, either as a puppet-play or, as a class in junior high school gave it recently, a "legitimate drama." The remarks of the manager are all the funnier when applied to real characters. The play explains clearly the reasons for the strange behavior of a respectable nursery character. It is to be published soon in a book of its own with illustrations by Mr. Maxfield Parrish (Scribner's). The author has written other plays and stories, some of which you may have seen in *St. Nicholas*, and also a pleasant operetta, with music by Alice Terhune — *The Woodland Princess*, listed in the bibliography following. She is also an actress with the New York Comedy Club, an excellent amateur organization.

Pompdehile's coat of arms, with a heart rampant (*i.e.*, standing on its hind legs, however that may be accomplished), reminds one of the arms suggested for the old clergyman-scholar, Mr. Casaubon, in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* — "three cuttlefish sable and a commentator rampant."

Lord Dunsany: FAME AND THE POET 134

Lord Dunsany (Edward Moreton Max Plunkett), the eighteenth baron of his name, is the author of a number of stories and plays unique in their type of clever imaginativeness. Besides the inimitable *Five Plays* and other dramas listed in the bibliography, his best writings are to be found in *Fifty-One Tales*, which includes "The Hen," "Death and Odysscus," "The True Story of the Hare and the Tortoise," and other highly entertaining matters. *Fame and the Poet*, originally published in the *Atlantic*, has been recently produced with good effect by the Harvard Dramatic Club. Fame's startling revelation to her faithful worshiper of her real nature and attributes is naturally most distressing — even more so, perhaps, than the rendezvous which this same goddess appointed another poet, in the *Fifty-One Tales*: "In the cemetery back of the workhouse, after a hundred years."

Lord Dunsany was a captain in the First Royal Iniskilling Fusileers — a regiment mentioned in Sheridan's *Saint Patrick's Day* — and saw service in Syria and the Near East as well as on the western front. He was wounded on April 25, 1916, in Flanders. Since the war he has visited the United States and seen a performance of his *Tents of the Arabs* at the Neighborhood Playhouse, New York City.

Beulah Marie Dix: THE CAPTAIN OF THE GATE

144

Miss Dix is author of several plays — in addition to those from *Allison's Lad* included in the play-list, of *Across the Border*, and, with the late Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland, of the frequently acted *Rose of Plymouth Town*. She has also written several favorite historical stories, including *Merry lips*. *The Captain of the Gate* is a tragedy of Cromwell's ruthless devastation of Ireland. The determined and heroic captain surrenders, to face an ignominious death, to keep his word and ensure delaying the advance of the enemy upon an unprepared countryside, and his courage inspires exhausted and failing men to like heroism. This is an effective piece of dramatic presentation.

Percy Mackaye: GETTYSBURG

160

Mr Percy Mackaye has been most active in the movement for a community theatre in the United States and for the revival of pageantry. He contends rightly that this development might be one of the strongest possible influences for true Americanism, and his dramatic work has all been directed toward such a theatre. Most notable are his pageants and masques, particularly *Caliban by the Yellow Sands*, for the Shakespeare Tercentenary; his play *The Scarecrow*, a lively dramatization of Hawthorne's *Feathertop*; his opera *Rip van Winkle*, for which Reginald De Koven composed music; and *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, in which the Wife of Bath is the heroine of further robustious adventures. Mr. Mackaye is also translator, with Professor Tablock, of the *Modern Reader's Chaucer*. The little sketch presented here is taken from a volume of *Yankee Fantasies*, in which various observations of past and present New England life are recorded. Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, a powerful story of the Civil War, is a most excellent help to realizing what the boy Lige really endured in those days of battle.

Mr. Mackaye has adopted here a regularly rhythmic verse without the conventional capital letters at the beginnings of lines — perhaps to typify the simple homeliness of the talk.

Harold Brighouse: LONESOME-LIKE 177

Mr. Brighouse has been best represented in this country by an excellent comedy, *Hobson's Choice*, which was widely played and was printed in the Drama League series of plays (1906). His other best-known work here is the present play, and *The Price of Coal* (1909), a picturing of the hard life of miners' wives and their Spartan firmness in expectation of fatal accidents. He has produced and published a number of other plays, among them those listed in the bibliography. Mr. Brighouse represents in this volume the work of the English Repertory theatres, which parallel the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, and various European stage-societies. That at Manchester, with which he has been associated, is directed by Miss Isabel Horniman, has seen beautiful stage-settings designed by Mr. Robert Burne-Jones, and counts among its dramatists such well-known men as Messrs. Allan Monkhouse, author of *Mary Broome*, a sombre and powerful tragedy; Stanley Houghton, and Gilbert Cannan. The Liverpool Theatre has become even more famous through the dramatic work of Mr. John Drinkwater. The Little Theatre movement in this country, our Drama League, and the various dramatic societies in our colleges and cities are our nearest parallel to these repertory theatres.

Lonesome-Like, Mr. Brighouse's most effective short play, is written in a modified Lancashire dialect, the speech of the village weavers and spinners. Many of the words are English of Elizabethan days and earlier, derived mostly from Anglo-Saxon.

Gradely (graithly) means willingly, meekly or decently; *clem* means starve; *sithes* is see you or look you, *clogs* are shoes with wooden soles and leather uppers, and *dungarees*, garments of coarse cotton cloth rather like overalls. *A* is used throughout for I.

As in many English stories, an extreme and painful dread of the *workus*, or poorhouse, provides a strong motive force.

John Millington Synge: RIDERS TO THE SEA 197

The work of the Irish Renaissance in the Abbey Theatre in Dublin reached its most powerful and tragic height in this trag-

edy, which Mr Yeats compared to the *Antigone* and *Oedipus* of Sophocles. Synge at first wandered about Europe, poetizing; it was Yeats who brought him back to study and embody in genuine literature the poetry of life among his own people. On the bleak Arran Islands he lived in a fisherman's cottage, and through the floor of his room heard the dialect which he presents in simple and poignant beauty in this drama of hopeless struggle. The "second sight" — called "the gift" in *Campbell of Kilmhor*, and an incident also in *The Riding to Lethend* — was a sort of prophetic vision altogether credited among Celtic peoples, as among those of Scott's *Lady of the Lake*. When the mother sees the "riders to the sea," — her drowned son and her living son riding together, — she feels convinced that he must soon die. The sharp cries of her grief and, above all, the peace of her resignation at the end, after all hope is gone, make this, as a writer in the *Manchester Guardian* is quoted as calling it, "the tragic masterpiece of our language in our time; wherever it has been in Europe, from Galway to Prague, it has made the word tragedy mean something more profoundly stirring and cleansing to the spirit than it did."

The speech of the people is not difficult to understand when you master a few of its peculiarities. One is the omission of words we generally include, as in, "Is n't it a hard and cruel man (who) won't hear. . . ." Another is the common form "It was crying I was." A few phrases, like *what way* for how, *the way* for so that, *in it* for here or near, and *itself* for even, or with no particular meaning, as "Where is he itself?" The meanings of other words will be easily untangled.

William Butler Yeats: THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE . 211

Mr. Yeats's best poetic dramas, and particularly this one, represent beyond question that "apex of beauty" to which Lady Gregory spoke of the Abbey Theatre dramatists as aspiring. This play is not founded on any particular Irish folk-tale. It is filled with the half-dread, half-envy with which the tellers of Irish legends seem to regard the fate of mortals bewitched by the Leprechaun or Good People. It is rich, too, with the music of beautiful words, without which, Mr. Yeats contends, no play can be "of a great kind." He says too, "There is no poem so great that a fine speaker cannot make it greater, or that a bad ear cannot make it nothing."

Mr. Yeats has written broad comedy like Synge's *Shadow of the Glen* and Lady Gregory's *Irish Comedies*; his *Pot of Broth* is a most clever retelling of an old, comical tale. But it is by his mystical and poetical plays that he would be judged as playwright and poet — particularly *Deirdre*, which should be compared with Synge's *Deirdre of the Sorrows*; *The Unicorn of the Stars*, written in collaboration with Lady Gregory; *Cathleen Ni Hoolhan*, a dramatization of the spirit of Ireland, *The King's Threshold*, a high glorification of the poet's art, with a fable, based on an ancient Celtic rite, of the hunger strike; and *The Land of Heart's Desire*, most beautifully perfect of all.

Gordon Bottomley: THE RIDING TO LITHEND

. 236

"*The Riding to Lithend* is an Icelandic play taken out of the noblest of the Sagas," wrote Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie in his review of the published drama in 1909. "[It] is a fight, one of the greatest fights in legend. . . . The subject is stirring, and Mr. Bottomley takes it into a very high region of poetry, giving it a purport beyond that of the original teller of the tale. . . . [The play] is not a representation of life, it is a symbol of life. In it life is entirely fermented into rhythm, by which we mean not only rhythm of words, but rhythm of outline also; the beauty and impressiveness of the play do not depend only on the subject, the diction, and the metre, but on the fact that it has distinct and most evident form, in the musician's sense of the word. It is one of those plays that reach the artist's ideal condition of music, in fact."

This is high praise; but who, after studying the play, will doubt that it is deserved? The powerfully moving events of the story indeed lead up to the climax in a forthright and exciting manner. The terror of the house-women and the thrall, the fearful love of Gunnar's mother Raunveig, and the caution of Kolskegg his brother, who "sailed long ago and far away from us" in obedience to the doom or sentence of the Thing — all these bring out sharply the quite reckless daring of Gunnar himself, who braves the decree. A mysterious and epic touch is added by the three ancient hags — evidently of these minor Norns who watch over individual destinies and announce the irrevocable doom of the gods. It was Hallgerd who broke their thread, representing, of course, Gunnar's span of life.

The centre of interest, as well as the spring of the action, is clearly Hallgerd, descendant of Sigurd Fafnirsbane and of Brynhild —

. . . a hazardous desirable thing,
A warm unsounded peril, a flashing mischief,
A divine malice, a disquieting voice

She, and not any superstitious belief in “second-sight” and death decreed, is the cause of Gunnar’s remaining outlawed. She wrangles about the headdress, not because she particularly wants it, but to send her husband on a perilous mission to secure it. She says openly that she has “set men at him to show forth his might . . . planned thefts and breakings of his word” to stir him to battle. Mr. Abercrombie believes that “She loves her husband Gunnar, but she refuses to give him any help in his last fight, in order that she may see him fight better and fiercer.” We should, then, have to suppose that her amazing speech at his death —

O clear sweet laughter of my heart, flow out!
It is so mighty and beautiful and blithe
To watch a man dying — to hover and watch —

is not for the blow Gunnar had given her when she “planned thefts and breakings of his word,” but is rather, as the lines powerfully indicate, the exultation of a descendant of the Valkyric watching above the battlefields.

Really poetical plays — plays which are both poetic and strongly dramatic — are indeed exceedingly rare. Mr. Bottomley is one of the few who have produced such drama in English. For many years he printed his work privately, in beautiful editions for his friends; but of late several of the plays have been made available — *King Lear’s Wife* in *Georgian Poetry*, 1913–15, and in a volume of the same title, including *Midsummer Eve* and *The Riding to Lithend*, published in London last year.

Those who want more stories of this sort will find them in *Thorgils* and other Icelandic stories modernized by Mr. Hewlett; in the *Burnt Njal*, translated by Sir George Dasent, from which this story itself springs; and in the translations by Eirikr Magnusson and William Morris, the *Saga Library* — particularly the stories of the Volsungs and Nibelungs, and of Grettir the Strong.

louvre — a smoke-hole in the roof

thrall — a captive or serf

bill — a battle-ax

second sight — prophetic vision, as in *Riders to the Sea* and *Campbell of Kilmhor*

feich — one's double, seeing it is supposed to be a sign that one is *fey* or fated to die

wimpled — “clouted up,” as Hallgerd expresses it, in a headdress rather like a nun's. A widow, apparently, might wear her hair uncovered

byre — cow-barn

mudden — manure

quean — in Middle-English, a jade; in Scotch, a healthy lass; the history of this word and of *queen*, which come from the same root, is strange and interesting

ambry — press

Romeborg — Rome, *Muhligarth* — Constantinople (Viking names)

Athcliath — evidently an Irish port

mumpers — beggars

Markfleet — a fleet in an inlet of the sea

mote or *gemote* — a formal assembly for making laws

thing — assembly for judgment, or parliament; this is an early Icelandic meaning of the word *thing*

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Thomas Bailey Aldrich

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PAULINE PAVLOVNA: Cleverly executed, slight plot in dialogue, wherein the character of the hero is sharply revealed, reminiscent of Browning's *In a Balcony*, though with a quite different scheme

Ibid.

Mary Austin

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Duffield

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THE WELL-REMEMBERED VOICE

Ibid.

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Lewis Beach

BROTHERS, A SARDONIC COMEDY. Two "poor whites" quarrel violently over a worthless inheritance, and then combine in arson to prevent their mother from getting it: a disquieting and searching study of depths of shiftlessness and passionate meanness.

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Jacinto Benavente

HIS WIDOW'S HUSBAND: An absurd comedy of the small gossip and rigid conventions in a Spanish provincial capital. (Translated by John Garrett Underhill.)

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Ibid.

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Doran.

THE TITLE: A delightful comedy in which several people who have denounced the disgraceful awarding of English titles have a bad time of it with Mrs. Culver, who does not propose to let slip the opportunity of being called "My Lady." You can probably guess which side wins in the end

Doran

Gordon Bottomley

KING LEAR'S WIFE: An episode in King Lear's earlier years, which throws much imaginative light on Goneril's and Cordelia's later treatment of their father. Lear's wife herself, as we might have guessed, is a pathetic figure.

Constable, London; also in *Georgian Poetry, 1913-15*.

MIDSUMMER EVE. Several farm maid-servants meet to see their future lovers' spirits on Midsummer Eve, but see only the "fetch" or double of one of them, foretelling her death

In *King Lear's Wife and Other Plays*, Constable.

Anna Hempstead Branch

ROSE OF THE WIND: A fairy play of the dancing and allurement of bewitched slippers, and of other wonders.

Houghton Mifflin.

Harold Brighouse

THE DOORWAY A sharp and cruel picture of unsheltered people on a freezing night in London.

Joseph Williams, London.

THE GAME A cocksure and triumphant girl meets more than her match in an old peasant woman, the mother of the man she wants to marry

In *Three Lancashire Plays*, Samuel French

HOBSON'S CHOICE. In which the eldest daughter at Hobson's plays a winning game against her tyrannous father and superior-feeling sisters, using a quite excellent but disregarded piece

Constable, London, Doubleday, New York

MAID OF FRANCE: An effective play in which Joan of Arc lays aside her old hate for the English soldiers, whom she discovers on French soil again.

Gowans and Gray, Glasgow.

THE OAK SETTLE

Gowans and Gray.

THE PRICE OF COAL: Picturing the stoical and terrible resignation to peril of death of old women in the coal regions — and presenting an unexpected ending

Gowans and Gray

Harold Brock

THE BANK ACCOUNT: A small but poignant tragedy of the savings-account which a clerk has counted upon to free him after many years of drudgery, and which he has entrusted to his stupid and vulgar and cheaply frivolous wife.

In *Harvard Dramatic Club Plays, First Series*, Brentano's

Alice Brown

JOINT OWNERS IN SPAIN: The two most refractory inmates of an Old Ladies' Home have to face and solve the problem of living in the same room.

Walter H. Baker.

Witter Bynner

THE LITTLE KING: A delineation of the cruel suffering and the dauntless courage of the small Louis XVII; he refuses to be cowed by the bullying of his keeper or to let a poor boy assume his fate.

Kennerley.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

George Calderon

THE LITTLE STONE HOUSE A mother has denied herself everything to build a small mausoleum to her dead son, and so idealized him meanwhile that her realization of the altered situation brings an astounding reaction

Sidgwick and Jackson.

Margaret Cameron

THE TEETH OF THE GIFT HORSE. A pleasant farce built about two huge and hideous hand-painted vases and a charming little old lady who perpetrated them

French.

Gilbert Cannan

EVERYBODY'S HUSBAND Three generations of ladies discuss the individual characteristics of their husbands, but find them, after all, indistinguishable men

Secker, London

JAMES AND JOHN They are faced with their invalid mother's request that they crown many years of tedious sacrifice and atonement for their father's weak crime by taking him into their lives again

In *Four Plays*, Sidgwick and Jackson

MARY'S WEDDING Bill's mother tries in vain to dissuade Mary from the certain and inescapable misery of marrying her drunkard son. Bill himself settles the problem.

Ibid

A SHORT WAY WITH AUTHORS An entertaining farce showing how a great actor-manager goes about encouraging serious dramatic composition.

Ibid.

Harold Chapin

AUGUSTUS IN SEARCH OF A FATHER He returns from abroad and discusses with a night-watchman the problem of his search for his father.

Gowans and Gray.

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE COFFEE STALLS: A strange character with an astonishing history is shown us in the night-light from a refreshment wagon in London streets.

Gowans and Gray

THE DUMB AND THE BLIND: A study of a bargeman's family in London tenements. Mr. William Archer calls this "a veritable masterpiece in its way — a thing Dickens would have delighted in. . . . We feel that the dumb has spoken and the blind has seen."

Gowans and Gray, forthcoming, French, New York.

IT'S THE POOR THAT 'ELPS THE POOR. Of the simple kindness of London costermongers and their neighborly help and sympathy.
French

MUDDLE ANNIE. Of course, it is "Muddle Annie" who helps their friend the policeman save the more suave and self-satisfied members of her family from a precious rogue.

Gowans and Gray.

THE THRESHOLD: Tells of a Welsh girl about to elope with a specious rascal, and of the intervention of her old father, who is killed in a mine accident.

Gowans and Gray, forthcoming, French

COMEDIES.

Chatto and Windus, London.

Colin Clements and John M. Saunders, translators

LOVE IN A FRENCH KITCHEN A comical mediæval French farce. Jacquinot endures a miserable compound tyranny of petticoats until matters are brought to a head by cumulative injustice and the intervention of accident

In *Poet Lore* (1917), 28:722

Padraic Colum

MOGU THE WANDERER: Pageantesque and dramatic story of the rise of a beggar to be the king's vizier, and of as sudden and entire reversal of fortunes.

Little, Brown.

THOMAS MUSKERRY: The tragic story of a poorhouse-keeper who repeats Lear's error of letting go his cherished power, and who suffers as keenly a more humble tragedy.

Maunsell, Dublin.

Rachel Crothers

HE AND SHE: A woman's designs win over those of her husband, who has the greater reputation, a large competitive award for a piece of sculpture; but she declines the commission in face of nearer and higher responsibilities.

In Quinn's *Representative American Plays*, Century.

Windsor P. Daggett and Winifred Smith

LELIO AND ISABELLA: A COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE: The story of Romeo and Juliet, as the foremost players of the Italian Comedy of Masks may have given it in seventeenth-century Paris — with an ending of their choice. An interesting study in the type.

In manuscript: N. L. Swartout, Summit, N.J.

W. H. Davies

THE MOLLUSC Clever study of a woman who is a mollusc — not merely lazy, since she is capable of huge exertions to avoid being disturbed, she finds plenty of opposition to show forth her powers upon
 Baker

Thomas H. Dickinson

IN HOSPITAL. A poignant small dialogue of a husband and wife who meet courageously the threatened shipwreck of their happiness.

In *Wisconsin Plays, First Series*, B. W. Huebsch

Beulah M. Dix

ALLISON'S LAD. A Cavalier lad, about to be shot as a spy, is seized by terror, but dies bravely, "as if strong arms were around him"

In *Allison's Lad and Other Martial Interludes*, Holt

THE DARK OF THE DAWN. Colonel Basil Tollocho spares a boy he has sworn to destroy in revenge of a great wrong, and is made glad of his clemency

Ibid.

THE HUNDREDTH TRICK Con of the Hundred Tricks takes fearfully stern measures against possible betrayal of his cause.

Ibid

Beulah Marie Dix and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland

Rose o' PLYMOUTH TOWN: A pleasant play of Puritans and their neighbors

Dramatic Publishing Company.

Oliphant Downs

THE MAKER OF DREAMS. Poetical small play in which love appears with a new make-up but in the old rôle

Gowans and Gray.

Ernest Dowson

THE PIERROT OF THE MINUTE: A quite charming tale of Pierrot and the Moon-Maidens.

In his *Collected Poems*, Lane.

John Drinkwater

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A dramatic presentation of episodes in Lincoln's life, from his nomination to the presidency to his death.

Sidgwick and Jackson, Houghton Mifflin.

COPHETUA. In which King Cophetua justifies to his court and councilors his marriage to the beggar maid

Sidgwick and Jackson, Houghton Mifflin

THE STORM An intense but quiet tragedy of a woman who waits while men search for her husband, lost in a great storm in the hills

In *Four Poetic Plays*, Houghton Mifflin, Pawns, Sidgwick and Jackson.

THE GOD OF QUIETNESS The zest of war draws away all the notable worshipers of the god of quietness, and an angry war-lord slays the god himself.

Ibid

X-O A NIGHT OF THE TROJAN WAR Trojans and Greeks, lovers of poetry, fellowship, and justice, carry on ruthless slaughter, and by irreparable losses strike a balance of exact advantage to either side

Ibid

Lord Dunsany

THE GODS OF THE MOUNTAIN. Of seven beggars who wear pieces of green silk beneath their rags, and by brilliant devices of Agmar, their leader, contrive to be taken for the gods of the mountain disguised as beggars — until the real gods leave their thrones at Marma

In *Five Plays*, Richards, London, Little, Brown

KING ARGIMENES AND THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR A slave, born a king, finds an old bronze sword buried in the ground he is tilling, and henceforward has less interest in the bones of the king's dog, who is dying

Ibid

THE GOLDEN DOOM: A child's scrawl on the palace pavements furnishes the text for the soothsayers' prophecy of disaster.

Ibid

THE LOST SILK HAT. Of the embarrassment of a rejected suitor who, in his agitation, has left his hat in the lady's drawing-room and dislikes the idea of returning for it

Ibid.

THE QUEEN'S ENEMIES. They are invited to a feast of reconciliation in the great banquet room below the level of the river

In *Plays of Gods and Men*, Unwin, London, J W Luce, Boston

A NIGHT AT AN INN: A commonplace ancient plot is filled anew with dramatic terror and a sense of mystery.

Ibid.

Edith M. O. Ellis (Mrs. Havelock Ellis)

THE SUBJECTION OF KEZIA: Joe Pengilly, a Cornish villager, is finally convinced that strong measures toward her subjection are alone capable

BIBLIOGRAPHY

of keeping his wife's love, and buys a stout cane We learn how he fared in carrying these measures out.

In *Love in Danger*, Houghton Mifflin.

St. John Ervine

FOUR IRISH PLAYS:

MIXED MARRIAGE. A tragedy of the violent hatreds of Ulster.

Maunsel

THE ORANGEMAN: A comic study of the petty madness of the same hatreds

Maunsel.

THE CRITICS Dramatic critics furiously condemn a play at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin Gradually we discover the idea of the play through their abuse, and at last we recognize it.

Maunsel

JANE CLEGG A strong and clear-sighted, honest woman has to deal with a feeble and braggart husband whose foolish crime threatens to wreck her own and her children's lives

Sidgwick and Jackson

Rachel Lyman Field

THREE PILLS IN A BOTTLE Fantastic play of a little sick boy who gives the medicine that was to have made him strong to feeding the starved and abused souls of various passers-by

In *Plays of the '47 Workshop, First Series*, Brentano's

Anatole France

THE MAN WHO MARRIED A DUMB WIFE. A mad and comic farce, in the tradition of *Pierre Patelin* and *The Physician in Spite of Himself*. Judge Botal calls in a learned physician and his aides to make his dumb wife speak The result is so astoundingly successful that he pleads for relief. Finally a desperate remedy is found.

Translated by Curtis Hidden Page, Lane, 1915

J. O. Francis

CHANGE The tragic conflict of ideals of two generations which have grown irreparably apart in social and economic views

Educational Publishing Company, Cardiff; Doubleday, New York

Zona Gale

THE NEIGHBORS. Kindliness called forth among village people to aid a poor seamstress who is to undertake the care of her orphan nephew.

In *Wisconsin Plays, First Series*, B. W. Huebsch.

MISS LULU BETT A starved life blossoms suddenly and unexpectedly. This play, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for 1920, is stronger and finer work than the author has done heretofore.

Appleton (in novel form).

John Galsworthy

THE ELDEST SON Sir William Cheshire comes to quite different solutions of similar problems when different individual and class factors enter into them.

Scribner's.

JUSTICE: Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn writes: "The economic structure of society on any basis requires the keeping of certain compacts. It cannot endure such a breaking of these compacts as Falder is guilty of when he changes the figures on the cheque. Yet by the simple march of events it is overwhelmingly proven that society here stamps out a human life not without its fair possibilities — for eighty-one pounds."

Scribner's.

THE LITTLE MAN: Brilliant caricature of various national types of tourist, and absurd apotheosis of the Little Man, of no particular nation and of insignificant appearance, who proves quietly capable of doing what the rest discuss.

Scribner's.

THE MOB: The reply of the hysterical and "patriotizing" members of his own class, and of the many-headed rage, to a man who stood against an unjust war.

Scribner's.

THE PIGEON A discussion of social misfits and mavericks, with, of course, no attempted panacea or solution.

Scribner's.

THE SILVER BOX:

"Jones: Call this justice? What about 'im? 'E got drunk! 'E took the purse -- 'E took the purse, but (*in a muffled shout*) it's 'is money got 'im off! Justice!"

"The Magistrate: We will now adjourn for lunch." (Act II.)

In *Plays, First Series*, Scribner's, 1916.

STRIKE: In the strike the leaders of the men and of the employers are staunch against compromise, but "the strong men with strong convictions are broken. The second-rate run the world through half-measures and concessions." (Lewisohn.)

Ibid.

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Louise Ayers Garnett

MASTER WILL OF STRATFORD A pleasant drama of Will Shakespeare's boyhood. Compare Landor's "Citation and Examination of Will Shakespeare for Deer-Stealing"

Macmillan

Alice Gerstenberg

OVERTONES While two women are conversing politely, they are attended by their real, unconventional selves, who interrupt to say what the women actually think and mean. Compare Ninah Wilcox Putnam's *Orthodoxy* (*Forum*, June, 1914, 51. 801), in which everyone in church says what he is thinking instead of what is proper and expected

In *Washington Square Plays*, Doubleday

Giuseppa Giacosa

THE RIGHTS OF THE SOUL Anna is sternly loyal to her husband Paolo, but refuses to submit to his incessant prying into her individuality and questioning of her thoughts and her feelings

Frank Shay

THE WAGER "Sentimental comedy, poetic and graceful, by one of the greatest contemporary Italian dramatists"

Barrett H. Clark, translator

French.

W. S. Gilbert

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN A most absurd parody on *Hamlet*, wherein a lamentable tragedy written and repented by his uncle the king is unearthed and turned to the sad prince's undoing

In *Original Plays*, Scribner's

Engaged

PRINCESS IDA

William Gillette

SECRET SERVICE A most intense situation in Richmond during the Civil War, ably handled by a quiet and brilliant Northern secret-service man; weakened by a manufactured happy ending

French

Susan Glaspell

TRIFLES Two women, by noting the significant trifles which the sheriff and the attorney overlook, discover the story of suffering which led to a crime. Speaking of their neglect of neighborly kindness, one says, "That's a crime too, and who's going to punish that?"

In *Washington Square Plays*.

Lady Gregory

IRISH FOLK-HISTORY PLAYS

I. THE TRAGEDIES: Stories of the beautiful and potent queens who brought suffering upon themselves and upon others, compare Synge's and Yeats's stories of Deirdre

Putnam

II. THE TRAGI-COMEDIES: *THE WHITE COCKADE*: In which James II defeats the gains of his loyal subjects by his abject and ridiculous cowardice.

Putnam

CANAVANS: A covetous miller, his clever wandering brother, and some pleasant absurdity about the popular worship of Queen Elizabeth by her loyal subjects in Ireland

Putnam

THE DELIVERER: Apparently an Irish peasant's idea of the story of Moses

Putnam

WORKHOUSE WARD; HYACINTH HALVEY; THE JACKDAW:

Comedies full of Irish wit, conscious and unconscious comedy, and endless complication of events and hearsay in Cloon.

All in *Seven Short Plays*, Putnam

THE BOGIE MAN, THE FULL MOON, COATS:

More about Cloon people, including the rescue of Hyacinth Halvey from his troublesome reputation and from the place by the magic and lunacy of moonlight

In *New Irish Comedies*, Putnam.

DAMER'S GOLD: A fortunate rescue from the torments of miserliness and pestilent heirs; the author's notes on the origin of the play are interesting.

Ibid.

THE GAOL GATE: A brief and effective tragic story of two women who fear that their man has betrayed his mates, but who find that he has been hanged without informing; the mother improvises a psalm of praise of his steadfastness.

In *Seven Short Plays*.

THE TRAVELING MAN: A peasant woman who has been befriended by a mysterious wanderer expects his return so that she may thank him. She drives away a tramp from her kitchen, and then discovers who he was.

Ibid.

THE GOLDEN APPLE: Many scenes, some excellent fun, of a search for miraculous fruit, of a giant who is high and bloodthirsty only in carefully fostered reputation, and the like matters.

Putnam.

St. John Hankin

THE PERFECT LOVER. Delightful dramatic version of Suckling's "Constant Lover."

In *Dramatic Works*, Secker

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL The same young man, or his close image, having managed to be received by his family as a returned prodigal, calmly puts upon them the question of his future

Ibid.

The Cassilis Engagement

Ibid.

Gerhardt Hauptmann

THE WEAVERS. Painful presentation of the suffering of the German weavers in the first adjustments of the Industrial Revolution

In Dickinson's *Chief Contemporary Dramatists*, also in Lewisohn's translations, Huebsch.

Winifred N. Hawkridge

THE FLORIST SHOP. Rather sentimental play of good influences wafted by a young woman as a florist's clerk, excellent business combines with the influences

In *Harvard Dramatic Club Plays, First Series*, Brentano's.

Hazelton and Benrimo

THE YELLOW JACKET The conventions of the Chinese theatre, more or less faithfully presented, make a quite comical presentment of an ancient Chinese legend

Bobbs, Merrill.

Theresa Helburn

ENTER THE HERO A madly fanciful girl fabricates a romance out of whole cloth, casts a friend as hero, and tells her small world about it. Even the rough measures the hero has to use to escape do not succeed in curing her of the habit

In *Flying Stage Plays, No. 4*, Ahrens; *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays*, Stewart and Kidd.

Perez Hirschbein

IN THE DARK Grim and awful picture of the depths of misery and starvation in a Ghetto basement Translated by Goldberg.

In *Six Plays of the Yiddish Theatre, First Series*: Luce.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal

MADONNA DIANORA. Fearsome tragedy of the Ring-and-Book sort, beautifully and poignantly presented.

Translated by Harriett Boas, Badger

Stanley Houghton

THE DEAR DEPARTED Somewhat precipitate haste for advantage in dividing grandfather's effects is fittingly rebuked

In *Dramatic Works*, vol 1 French, New York, Constable, London

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT A mother finds being an "imaginary invalid" excellent for checkmating her daughter's plans, but inconveniently in the way of her own

Ibid

Laurence Housman

RETURN OF ALCESTIS A modern poetic view of the spirit of Alcestis returning to Admetus after her sacrifice and rescue Edwin Arlington Robinson has also handled this theme lately

French.

BIRD IN HAND A pedantic old scholar is mysteriously plagued by an illusion of faery, but in time conquers the obsession

French

BETHLEHEM. A nativity play

Macmillan.

THE CHINESE LANTERN: Pleasantly effective scenes in a Chinese studio.

Sidgwick and Jackson.

William Dean Howells

THE SLEEPING CAR; THE REGISTER, THE MOUSE TRAP; THE ALBANY DEPOT, THE GARROTTERS.

Amusing but somewhat worn farces, several of them introducing the volatile Mrs Roberts and her family.

Henrik Ibsen

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE. A scientist who insists on making known, and setting to work to remedy, the evils and wrongs of his community has to reckon with the people, compare *The Mob*, by John Galsworthy.

Boni and Liveright.

THE DOLL'S HOUSE: Nora Hjalmar, who has always been petted and shielded, at last has to face and solve certain difficult problems for herself. She thus discovers just how much her husband's love and indulgence are worth. Her solution of the difficulty is presented, not as necessarily the right thing to have done, but as what such a woman would do under the circumstances.

Boni and Liveright.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

THE LADY FROM THE SEA Ellida Wrangel, wife of the village pastor, feels the call of the sea, she feels she must go with the rough sailor to whom she was once betrothed. When Wrangel sincerely offers her liberty to choose, she "seeks the security of a familiar home, and the wild lure of the great sea spaces can trouble her no more" (Lewisohn)

Boni and Liveright.

W. W. Jacobs and Others

ADMIRAL PETERS, THE GRAY PARROT, THE CHANGELING; BOATSWAIN'S MATE:

Jolly farces of sailors and watchmen and their families, based on Jacobs's stories in *Captains All, Many Cargoes*, and the rest

French

THE MONKEY'S PAW A most fearful and gruesome play, based on Jacobs's story, in the vein of the *Three Wishes*, and the *Foot of Pharaoh*, by Gautier.

French.

Jerome K. Jerome

FANNY AND THE SERVANT PROBLEM The new Lady Bantock is surprised to discover both her real rank and her strange relationship with her twenty-three servants An interesting character study.

French

William Ellery Leonard

GLORY OF THE MORNING The pathos of two civilizations contending for the children of the Indian woman, Glory of the Morning; they must go with their father to France or stay with their mother Dr. Leonard has newly completed another powerful tragedy, *Red Bird*, as yet unpublished.

In *Wisconsin Plays, First Series, 1914*, B W Huebsch

Justin McCarthy

IF I WERE KING A romantic play, in the vein of De Banville's *Gringoire*, in which Villon becomes Marshal of France, for a brief time and with a fearful condition stipulated by the spider-king, Louis XI.

Heinemann

Edward Knoblauch and Arnold Bennett

MILESTONES: Three different generations, with their different ideas and ideals, confront similar problems with different views, and arrive at various conclusions.

Doran

Percy Mackaye

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS. Mr. Mackaye, translator with Professor Tatlock of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, has written here a clever play of the travelers' adventures. The Wife of Bath is of course the ringleader in mischief.

Macmillan.

CALIBAN BY THE YELLOW SANDS. A masque for the Shakespeare Tercentenary Celebration, New York City

Doubleday.

JEANNE D'ARC. A tragedy made up of incidents in the life of the Maid Macmillan

SAM AVERAGE. A Silhouette. A soldier of 1812 is kept true to the cause by a vision of Sam Average, the spirit of his nation

In *Yankeey Fantasies*, Duffield

THE SCARECROW. A lively dramatization of Hawthorne's *Feathertop*, from *Mosses from an Old Manse*

Macmillan

Mary MacMillan

THE SHADOWED STAR. Portraying the cruel suffering of two Irish peasant women who wait in a city tenement for Christmas as they remember it.

In *Short Plays*, Stewart and Kidd.

Maurice Maeterlinck

ARDIANE AND BLUEBEARD. A resolute wife finally defies Bluebeard and rescues his wives, but they refuse to forsake their unfortunate and beloved husband.

Dodd, Mead

A MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTHONY

THE INTRUDER; THE DEATH OF TINTAGILES, INTERIOR (OR HOME).

Poignant and mystical tragedies expressing the unseen and inescapable forces surrounding and closing in upon men's lives

Boni and Liveright; Dodd, Mead

THE BLUE BIRD: Two peasant children, accompanied by their friends Dog, Cat, Bread, Sugar, and others, search everywhere for the blue bird of happiness. They visit among other places the realms of the dead, where their grandparents are, and of the unborn. Finally they look in the last and likeliest place.

Dodd, Mead.

THE BETROTHAL. Further adventures of Tytyl.

Dodd, Mead.

John Masefield

PHILIP THE KING; TRAGEDY OF POMPEY THE GREAT.

Hugh tragedies. The great Pompey, defeated by the upstart Cæsar, is kingly to the end.

Sidgwick and Jackson, London, Macmillan, New York

THE SWEEPS OF NINETY-EIGHT: A fugitive from an unsuccessful rebellion achieves a sweeping revenge upon the leaders of the enemy; amusing comedy

Macmillan.

THE TRAGEDY OF NAN: One of the most poignantly tragic of modern plays, the mercilessness of weak and selfish people crushes out a beautiful life.

Richards, London

Rutherford Mayne (J. Waddell)

THE DRONE: An old man by playing craftily at being on the eve of a great invention lives most comfortably on his brother's means, but forces accumulate against him and he is threatened with eviction from the hive.

Luce.

George Middleton

THE BLACK TIE: A play of sharp and quiet suffering, presenting at a new angle the Southern cleavage of races. The negro classes are not allowed to appear in the Sunday-school procession, and the small disappointment is typical of greater deprivations

In *Possession and other One-Act Plays*, Holt.

MASKS: An author who has spoiled a good play so that it will "go" on the stage is called upon by the angry characters, whom he created and then forced to do as they would not really have done

In *Masks and other One-Act Plays*, Holt.

MOTHERS: A mother tries in vain to prevent a young woman whom she loves from marrying her son and repeating the misery of her own marriage with a weakling

In *Tradition and other One-Act Plays*, Holt.

ON BAIL: A gambler's wife who has shared his illegal gains must help him pay his debt to the law, their son, too, is involved.

Ibid.

THE TWO HOUSES: An old professor and his wife talk quietly together of the plans and the realities they have lived among.

In *Masks*, etc.

WAITING: False conventional ideas have long thwarted, and now threaten to wreck, the happiness of people who care greatly for each other.

In *Tradition*, etc.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

ARIA DA CAPO. A fantasy in which Pierrot, Columbine, and the Greenwich shepherds of Theocritus display their varied views of life

In *Reedy's Mirror* reprinted in *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays*, Stewart and Kidd, Cincinnati

Allan Milne

THE BOY COMES HOME: A war profiteer has a bad half-hour of difficulties in getting his soldier nephew to work and live according to his views, he then faces the problem in reality.

In *First Plays*, Knopf

THE LUCKY ONE. The Lucky One fails to win a trick he had counted on, but his chorus of relatives — surely related to Sir Willoughby Paternoster's — do not even notice the misfortune.

Ibid

WURZEL-FLUMMERY Of two men offered a good-sized fortune by a will provided they will adopt Wurzel-Flummery in place of their own more satisfactory surnames, and of their decision.

Ibid

Allan Monkhouse

NIGHT WATCHES. A quiet and vivid picturing of the potential cruelty and frightfulness of ordinary well-meaning ignorance and terror; the fable reminds one of Galsworthy's "The Black Godmother," in *The Inn of Tranquillity*

In *War Plays*, Constable, London.

William Vaughn Moody

THE FAITH HEALER: A serious drama presenting in moving and human fashion the effects of faith and disillusion

Macmillan.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji

THE JUDGMENT OF INDRA. A Hindu play, in which a priest of Indra, after making a supreme sacrifice of himself and others in order to root out human affection from his heart, thinks that his god speaks in the lightning of the storm that ensues

In *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays*, edited by Shay and Loving.

Stewart and Kidd.

Tracy Mygatt

GOOD FRIDAY: A Passion Play. A powerful tragedy of the conscientious objector.

Published by the author, 23 Bank Street, New York, N.Y.

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Alfred Noyes

SHERWOOD: A poetical play of Robin Hood and his band
Stokes.

Eugene O'Neill

BEYOND THE HORIZON: The Pulitzer Prize Play, 1920 A tragic story of a young man who longed to seek romance "beyond the horizon," and could find neither that nor any happiness, but only defeat and misery, in his everyday surroundings

Boni and Liveright

BOUND EAST FOR CARDIFF: The injury and death of a forecastle hand, illuminating the varying natures of his shipmates

In *Moon of the Caribees*, Boni and Liveright.

IN THE ZONE: Suspicion of treachery in the submarine zone, directed against a sailor who is different from the rest in the forecastle

Ibid

WHERE THE CROSS IS MADE: An old sailor goes mad waiting futilely for the return of a treasure expedition he has sent out, and the madness of his idea spreads like panic

Ibid

Hubert Osborne

THE GOOD MEN DO AN INDECOROUS EPILOGUE: Shakespeare's family carefully burn his surviving plays in the effort to cast oblivion upon his low occupation

In *Plays of the 47 Workshop, First Series*, 1918

Monica Barrie O'Shea

THE RUSHLIGHT: A mother, whose son may be saved if he will betray his comrades, has only to send him a paper containing the information the authorities want. Her attitude should be compared with that of the women in *Campbell of Kilmhor* and Lady Gregory's *The Gaol Gate*

Drama, November, 1917, 28. 602.

Louis N. Parker

DISRAELI: Play of intrigue centring about the character of Lord Beaconsfield and his manœuvres to obtain control of the Suez Canal Lane.

MINUET: A brief play of courage and loyalty in face of Madame Guillotine.

In *Century Magazine*, January, 1915

Josephine Preston Peabody

MARLOWE A tragedy introducing several of the Elizabethan playwrights in tavern scenes, and making a fine and romantic character of Kit Marlowe

Houghton Mifflin

THE PIPER A pleasant dramatization of the legend of Hamelin Town.
Houghton Mifflin

THE WOLF OF GUBBIO A play about Saint Francis and some of his brothers, both animals and villagers

Houghton Mifflin

Louise Saunders (Perkins)

THE WOODLAND PRINCESS: Very attractive children's operetta with music by Alice Terhune

Schirmer; French.

Stephen Phillips

ULYSSES: A drama or masque of Ulysses' adventures, from his farewell to Calypso through a vigorous combat with the wooers.

Macmillan

Eden Phillpotts

THE SHADOW. A most affecting and tragic play of the influence of a crime upon two people who love most sincerely, and upon their very loyal friend

In *Three Plays*, Duckworth, London.

THE MOTHER: A moving presentation of the force of a mother's sense and love; she refuses to shield her son when he has done wrong, but works in every way to set him straight and to continue her influence after her death.

Ibid

THE POINT OF VIEW: A domestic altercation is arbitrated by a friend of the family, and then the arbiter is given new light on the situation

Curtain Raisers, Duckworth, London.

Arthur Wing Pinero

THE PLAYGOERS: A farce in which a lady attempts to provide cultural amusement for her servants, and succeeds in breaking up the smooth-running establishment.

London.

David Pinski

ABIGAIL: A dramatization of a Biblical story from the wars of David. Translated from the Yiddish by Dr. Goldberg.

In *Six Plays of the Yiddish Theatre*, Luce.

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FORGOTTEN SOULS Fanny Segal's self-sacrifice for her sister and lover is carried to a strange and morbid extreme.

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Serafin and Joaquim Quintero

A SUNNY MORNING. Two very old people recall the tremendously romantic happenings of their early youth.

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THE ROMANCEERS. The foolish and romantic notions of two lovers are ably caricatured by their fathers' plots and stratagems.

Baker, 1906.

Arthur Schnitzler

LAST MASKS A dying man in the Vienna Hospital contrives an opportunity for the cruel stroke he has intended at a man who has succeeded where he himself has failed, at the moment of possible triumph a different mood controls him There are three excellent studies of character in the play

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ANDROCLES AND THE LION: The old story of a saint whom the lion remembered as his friend — with much shrewd light upon certain types of early Christians.

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CÆSAR AND CLEOPATRA New views of the chief characters, introduced by two interesting scenes — of a garrison in Syria by night and of Cleopatra in the arms of the Sphinx.

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THE MAN OF DESTINY Napoleon after Lodi, attacking all courses of his dinner simultaneously, drawing maps with his fork dipped in the gravy, and discoursing shrewdly on courage and success.

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A MARRIAGE HAS BEEN ARRANGED Comedy of a rejected proposal for a society "marriage of convenience," followed by an adjustment of understanding upon another basis

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DEIRDRE OF THE SORROWS A beautiful and poetic dramatization of the tragic Celtic legend of Deirdre and the Sons of Usna This may well be compared with Yeats's dramatization of the same story.

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THE PLOWBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD Rather fearful comedy of the popular idolatry offered by Irish peasants to a man who boasts he has killed his father

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IN THE SHADOW OF THE GLEN An awesome husband makes a test of his wife's love.

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THE TINKER'S WEDDING: Rather boisterous comedy of a tinker-woman who upsets ancient custom by insisting on a church wedding

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THE WELL OF THE SAINTS: A gruesome tragedy of a blind beggar and his wife. All these dramas are as strangely filled with beauty and poetry of expression as is the *Riders to the Sea*

Luce.

Rabindranath Tagore

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Macmillan.

Anton Tchekhov

THE BOOR, THE MARRIAGE PROPOSAL; THE WEDDING FEAST; THE TRAGEDIAN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF.

Comical farces of extravagant conversation and action, and apparently real studies of Russian character.

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THE ROSE AND THE RING: One of the most delightful of puppet-plays is based on the favorite story.

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OLIVER GOLDSMITH A very engaging play, introducing Burke, Goldsmith, Garrick in several amusing rôles, Dr. Johnson, and others in his circle, and presenting (in Act II) a dress rehearsal of *She Stoops to Conquer*
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Frank G. Tompkins

SHAM: A SOCIAL SATIRE Of a most superior burglar, who takes only genuine objects of art, disdains the imitation stuff that litters Charles and Clara's home, and reads them a severe lecture on reality and sham in this and other departments of life.

Stewart and Kidd.

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